OCTOBER 1948

APOLLO

the Magazine of the Arts for

Connoisseurs and Collectors

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APOLLO

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ARTS FOR CONNOISSEURS AND COLLECTORS

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T. Livingstone Baily, Advertising Director. H. W. Finnegan Jennings, D.F.C., Manager
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CURRENT SHOWS AND COMMENTS *BY PERSPEX*

WRESTLING JACOB

THE re-opening of three of the Turner Rooms at the Tate Gallery reminds us anew, if we were in any danger of forgetting, what a supreme and daring artist Turner was. His work is a constant series of assignations with the impossible and of incredible conquests: Jacob wrestling with the angel, and the watchword which has echoed down the centuries to us from that Bronze-Age legend: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." That in this world of art is the heroic quality, and Turner has it in a degree few others can claim.

In front of the first oil painting ever exhibited by him, a painting loaned to the present Tate show by its present owner, Mr. Francis Fairfax-Cholmeley, one gets the feeling that the artist had deliberately set himself a task beyond his powers, and then stretched his capacity to encompass it.

"Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for?"

Browning, who understood so much of this business of art, puts the words into the mouth of his Andrea del Sarto. They were more than true of Turner.

That first picture belongs to early 1795 and so was painted when Turner was nineteen. And he paints, what? A sea-piece at night; the full moon breaking through a rift in the clouds lights an area of tossing waves whereon a group of fishing boats are riding, with the rock forms of The Needles dark in the background. Could anything be more difficult? He may not entirely succeed: the chiaroscuro almost defeats him with its violent contrasts; the lighted crests of the waves are a little thin and scratchy and fail to give the sense of the mass solidity of the water which ultimately he was so grandly to convey; the colour is inky. But, let us repeat: Turner was 19, and this was his first serious oil painting. He had already done remarkable things in architectural and topographical water-colours, had left his teacher—that conscientious draughtsman, Thomas Malton—and had set up his own studio.

"FIRE AT SEA." By TURNER
From the Turner Exhibition at the Tate Gallery
PERSPEX's choice for the Picture of the Month

Thenceforward until he died in 1851 "an old man mad with painting" as Japanese Hokusai described himself, Turner's life was a series of such encounters with supreme problems. He measured himself against the accepted gods of his time; against Van de Velde and the Dutch sea-painters; against Claude and the Italian painters of tranquil earth and sun-drenched sky; and when he left them all behind, he challenged nature in her most complicated, her most grandiose aspects. Sun-blaze, storm, fire; the sea in its fury, the sky in its majesty: wheresoever there were staggering light and terrific colour he made his essays. There is heroism in this business of painting, heights where the human spirit knows itself one with grandeur.

The Tate pictures show him in every one of his phases, but invariably in this heroic mood. One can only stand reverently before such a tremendous work (tremendous simply as *work*, I mean) as the vast "Richmond Hill on the Prince Regent's Birthday, 1819," and assess the task he had set himself in depicting that crowd of figures set in a noble classical landscape. We watch him challenge the Dutchmen in his "Windsor" in 1810; challenge Claude in his pictures of the next decade, and surpass him in the supreme classicism of "The Bay of Baiæ" where shadow almost disappears as the artist looks straight into the eye of the sun. "*Splendide mendax*" somebody wrote on the frame when first it was exhibited, and that might have become the motto of Turner from that time forth. He was a wildly romantic poet telling the visual truth of nature in the splendid mendacity of art.

Those later pictures carried the art of Europe into a new dimension. Whatever defied all powers of representation he represented. The "Fire at Sea" painted in 1834 may stand for the apotheosis of this Faustian bid for power beyond human conception. The blazing fire fanned and blown into flying fragments by the storm, the fury of sky and sea, the huddled crowds on decks already awash with water: all is truly terrific. Turner, like Leonardo with whom in his Neitzchean quality he compares, was concerned only with the painter's problems under conditions of supreme difficulty. The French Romantics of the period, Gericault, Delacroix (who had a little of the same temper) are journalistic and pedestrian compared with this titanic creature whose traffic was with the elemental: fire, earth, air, and water.

At the end his art triumphed over all mysteries of form, colour, and light in nature. He continued to essay the impossible. In those last years he set himself the task of uniting his strongest colour passage with his lightest tone. He solved it in the Petworth interior where the sunlight striking full on the crimson of a table cloth fills the room with the blaze of reflected illumination. He found subjects in the new industrial age with such a miracle of painting as "Tapping the Furnace." Turner painted that in 1847 when he was seventy-two. One can only look at it with awe, bewildered by the concentrated energy of fire and white-hot molten metal, and bewitched by the stupendous power of this old man who could put that down in pigment. Even the quieter moods are awe-inspiring in another way. The mist-filled sunlight of the final version of "Norham Castle"; the white ghost sails of the "Whalers"; the last pictures he painted in Venice, the city he loved because here at least no dead earth invalidated the glory of the sun-glow, and the buildings, like "the cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces" of Prospero, were "such stuff as dreams are made on," ethereal, aureoled, suspended in the bright air between sky and water.

It is almost relieving to realise that Turner did have a limitation: he could not paint figures except indefinitely on a small scale. Two unfinished essays of large-scale figure painting made about 1830 are almost complete failures.

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Any other painting after looking at Turner seems grey and comparatively colourless as though one had stared too long in the face of the sun. The best of the Impressionists alone can bear comparison, and none of them has Turner's technical power or his vitality. Von Gogh had his spirit, but not his unerring draughtsmanship; Gauguin had his passion, but not his prowess. (There is, by the way, a delightful little marble head of "Madame Gauguin" by Gauguin in the Courtauld Collection at the Tate which shows that artist from a new angle.) Yeats has Turner's fury but fails in his command over the medium; for paint seems to use Yeats, rather than the reverse.

So we come down from this Mount of Transfiguration and walk the comparatively common earth where Constable and Gainsborough trod. There is at Leggatt's Galleries an Autumn Exhibition of Old Masters largely given over to British painting. Gainsborough in particular has some fascinating work there, including at least one fine landscape where he is under the influence of Claude, but quietly so, without any of the bravura of Turner. An interesting incident of the Exhibition is the hanging side by side of Gainsborough's "The Young Gamekeeper" and the work by Teniers the Elder of which it is a free copy. In a recent issue of APOLLO where the Gainsborough was reproduced, we expressed the hope that this original might be loaned for this fascinating comparison, for it has long been a matter of critical dispute which is the better picture.

Another fine Gainsborough in this show is the version of "The Harvest Wagon" from Sir George Beaumont's collection, an earlier, more formal and less lyrical rendering than the one from Lord Swaything's collection which recently sold at Christie's to the Barber Institute for £20,475. Of other paintings there is a large spirited Zoffany portrait of "Mr. Townsend in the Pantomime 'Merrie Sherwood' "; one especially delightful Constable of the early Suffolk period; a large group portrait of "The Martin-Atkins Family" by John Singleton Copley; and two of those quaint (and now so much sought after) studies of "Birds and Landscape" by James Bogdani, the Hungarian who became Queen Anne's painter.

An exhibition of charm rather than greatness is that at the Leicester Gallery where the Collection of Sir Louis Fergusson, K.C.V.O., is showing. Sir Louis as a public servant was keeper of the records of the Duchy of Lancaster, as a private art enthusiast he has made himself an authority on Degas (one powerful little early Degas, "*Jeune Garcon Italien*," is included among the pictures shown). He bought drawings and paintings with great discrimination from the Camden Town Group, Sickert, Gilman, Ginner, Robert Bevan, and the rest. These are lovely intimate things, and if one had not been still under the spell of Turner one would have seen them with the loving eye of their collector. Happily they speak the language of earth with their own quiet voice, for there is a great unity among them which indicates one dominant artistic appreciation.

The Camden Town Group are, indeed, unambitious, intimate, rather than daring painters—melodists of the kind who can least bear comparison with the full blast of Turner's Wagnerian orchestration. They must be judged, however, on their own ground, and thereby will be accredited as decorative, colourful, human and appealing even though they may be too static and two dimensional. Not for them the fire and fury of storms at sea or fiery furnaces; nothing more elemental than a lady of dubious respectability but attractive curvature posing alluringly on a cheap iron bedstead in a furnished room out Mornington Crescent way. But how well observed and rendered into the terms of art!

In the adjoining gallery at the Leicester are paintings by Alva. The catalogue admits that his name "will only be remembered by the more tenacious followers of contemporary art," and I will confess my own lack of tenacity. I will confess, too, to an unreasonable objection to any artist using a name which makes him sound like a soap powder, for it smacks a little of that kind of contemporary publicity which may get him somewhere, but will add nothing to the stature of his art. A very large, expensive looking monograph and a rather too fulsome catalogue introduction added to my prejudice. Expensive monographs should follow the establishment of an artist, not precede it. In the foreword to the catalogue we are assured, amazingly, that "his method was in the great tradition in descent from Veronese." Amazingly, for (unless "descent" is the keyword) I cannot see anything even remotely like Veronese about it. If the eulogist had linked his subject with Rembrandt in this fine careless rapture one might concede one very small jot to the comparison. But Veronese; no!

This mistaken publicity apart, Alva's actual work is interesting at times. The tiny pictures with intense dark backgrounds from which emerge a few lines and patches of vivid rich colour tragically hint at the heads of the Jewish prophets whose names they bear: Moses, Job and Jeremiah, Isaiah and Elijah, Saul and David: the heroes and prophets of his race are cleverly evoked. His pictures bearing flower titles, on the other hand, do not evoke anything; and as soon as he works on any even moderately large scale the canvas becomes flat and empty, which was scarcely a characteristic of Veronese. Had less been claimed for Alva we would have conceded him more, for he is clever in both the best and the worst sense of that overworked word.

Nearer truly to Veronese, but that chiefly in the fact that he was capable of filling a vast mural space or a very large canvas with an intricate pattern of figures in the grand style, was Sigismund Goetze, a memorial exhibition of whose work is being held at the R.B.A. Galleries with the proceeds of sales given to the Artists' General Benevolent Fund. Goetze, although he died as recently as 1939, belongs to the almost mythical period of the artistic life of London when the fashionable artists lived in princely style in their great houses. He himself was art patron as well as painter, and was particularly munificent in giving funds for sculpture such as the "St. George and the Dragon," the War Memorial by Charles Hartwell outside Grove House at Regent's Park where he lived. Among his large mural decorations are the series on the entrance stairway of the Foreign Office on which he worked for nine years; and one of the panels in the Royal Exchange. One of his Academy pictures, "He was Despised and Rejected," created a sensation when it was exhibited in 1904; for in those days the "picture of the year" with its message, was a public event, and Goetze's picture attracted enormous crowds and gave rise to tremendous controversy. Save for one picture, "Dawn," painted after the 1914-18 war and showing a symbolic figure still enmeshed in barbed wire but looking out across the broken guns to the rising light, there are none of these large subject pictures in this exhibition. It consists chiefly of small landscapes made on holidays, and serves best to remind us of a charming and public-spirited personality.

At the other extreme of art stand the lithographs by Picasso showing at the Arts Council Galleries in St. James's Square. These are recent works, and to me, even when I am fortified by Mr. Philip James's eulogistic foreword, they have no meaning at all. "In his complete maturity," says Mr. James, "he shows us the timelessness, the mystery and the love that are the essence of all great art, in which one does not hesitate to include his own." Of these attributes I will accept the mystery; and I wonder whether Picasso has become merely a habit to which the modernist minded react mechanically. It has now become fashionable to talk of the "texture" of his lithographs, especially of the illustrations to Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle* which are pleasant enough and at least tolerable in an ordinary way. If they did not bear the name of Picasso we should place them in their rightful perspective. As for the pastiche of prehistoric cave-drawings, and other deliberately sought primitivism I will persist that it is all part of a society where we are refusing the challenge of true values. Whatever high-falutin' goes on about it, I maintain that it is shallow and extremely boring, empty, childish, unoriginal, without imagination or any other of the qualities which constitute greatness in art either traditional or modern. It is time we revalued the undoubted contribution which Cubism, Primitivism, Expressionism and the rest have made to European art. Such a revaluation might get us out of this Picasso habit and sort out his real service to art from this dully repetitive parody of his own mannerisms.

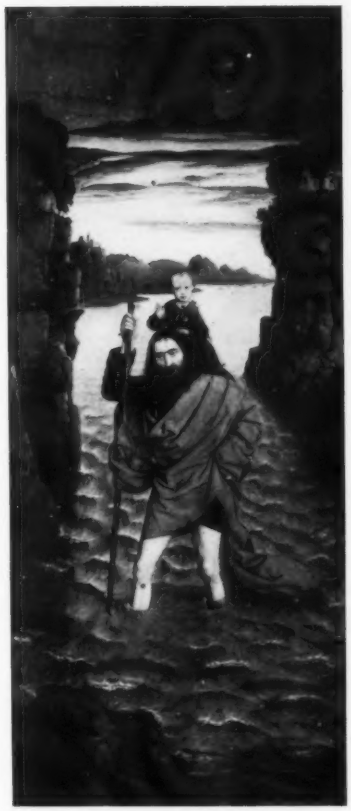
In a pleasanter world and at the risk of being told that one only enjoys the safe and accepted past one welcomes the promise of an Exhibition at the Whitechapel Art Gallery of "Prints and Sculpture," the former largely from the British Museum collection, the latter from private owners. Also the opportunity of acquainting ourselves with the all-too-little-known art of South Africa in an Exhibition at the Tate Gallery under the auspices of the South African Government. We need to know more of the art of both South Africa and of Australia. That of Canada is somewhat familiar. This Exhibition will help fill the gap. Much of the work—too much one is inclined to say—has its roots in Paris rather than on the Veldt, so that it is the South African landscape which is left to provide the novel element. Pierneef, the accepted doyen of South African art, has some striking and lovely work, among which I loved best the exquisitely decorative "Wild Sering Tree." One could wish that there were more purely native art like that of Gerard Sekoto, a self-taught Bantu artist whose "Three Picanins" is a delight. I am sorry to see that he is at present studying in Paris. The wood sculpture in this exhibition is noteworthy: Frieda Ollemans' "Thinker" and Moses Kottler's "Mother and Child" are among the most fascinating pieces. We thank South Africa for the opportunity of seeing this exhibition which is to go on ultimately to New York.

A Painter of the Gothic: DIRCK BOUTS

BY F. M. GODFREY

Photos : P. Bijtebier, Brussels

THE triptych of the Adoration with St. John and St. Christopher which Bouts painted towards the end of his life for the chapel of the Snoij family at Malines, stands out even among the fine body of work which the Munich Pinacotheque owns of the master. Visitors to Brussels, Amsterdam or Paris will have been able to study this year three further panels by Bouts which are among the 140 master pieces from Munich so assembled by the "Fine Arts and Archives Section" of the American Army.



The St. Christopher of the "Adoration" is like work of the miniaturist of "translucent enamel." The royal blue of the rippling waves, white-crested line by line with pointed brush, the widening rocky coast, the sun-warmed surface, the glow of the evening sky, almost make us forget the familiar foreground figure, so much is the landscape a thing of solitary and silent beauty

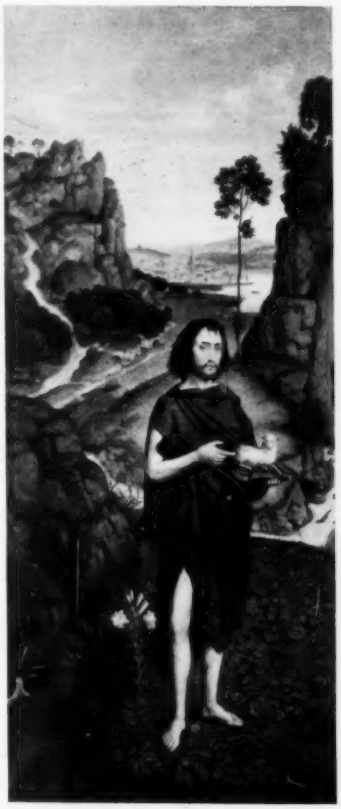
I can see three reasons why these pictures of an austere and ungainly Primitive draw us and hold us with such power that falls little short of fascination. It is by their uncommon quality of paint, as luminous and glowing as "translucent enamel," by the perfect magic of their scenic beauty and by the spiritual strength of their medieval faith.

Bouts has for long been known as an eminent landscape painter. "Claruit inventor in describendo rure" is written of him in Molanus' chronicle. It is not to be wondered at, for while we look at St. Christopher earnestly bearing the Child across the narrow river, we perceive the plastic volumes of this familiar group by means of the air, the light and the atmosphere that surrounds them ; for the figures of Bouts are round and sculptural and the illusion of depth is gained by subtle gradations of colour and light. Here the figures come between the intense blueness of the rippling waves and the radiant background of water and sky where the dark rocky ranges dissolve dream-like into a limpid infinity of space.

With Bouts, it seems, landscape came first and figures second, or rather he conceived them together in unison, for the separation is modern, and in his pictures the human body creates the atmosphere in which it moves and has its being. Born of Dutch parents in 1400 and leaving his native Haarlem for the richer pastures of Flanders and Brabant, he has often been called the first of the Dutch landscape painters ; and there is indeed a marked resemblance between his narrow river valleys, his winding streams and blue distances and those of Brueghel and Patinir.

Yes, he was the first to conceive his religious subjects within the wide open spaces and phantastic rocks of his imaginary landscape. He must have delighted in elaborate execution of flower and plant and receding hillside, enhancing the depth of his spatial designs by the slender forms of a single tree as was Perugino to do after him and as we see it in our picture of Christ walking by the banks of the Jordan.

Friedlaender has shown how limited and conservative was Bouts' handling of moving figures, for he gave to his Christ by the river the same position of leg as to the Redeemer rising from the grave. It is the same Christ, solemn, solitary, unapproachable, archaic, his feet scarcely treading the ground, a ghostly vision. The river more than divides the Baptist and the kneeling Donor who devoutly worships the distant apparition. This monkish Donor, of a more courtly countenance than is usual with Bouts, seems to belong to the Burgundian circle, known to us through the portraits of Roger van der Weyden.



The companion panel of the "Adoration" also places a large human figure—St. John the Baptist—in the near foreground against an elaborate landscape of meadow, rock and town. Justly has Bouts been derived from Jan van Eyck who in his "Adoration of the Lamb" similarly adorned his Elysian fields with homely blade and flower. Bouts forgets neither lizard nor blackbird on the ground, but he gives to his distance an aerial atmosphere palpitating with life and to his structural design a perfect unity

The connection between Bouts and Roger is still largely conjectural as far as factual evidence is concerned. Bouts is first mentioned in Louvain when in 1447 he married a prosperous wife, Catherine van der Brugghen. Louvain, where Roger's famous altar of the Deposition stood, belonged to the spiritual realm of the Brussels court painter. We have no dated work of Bouts before the London portrait of a man of 1462. It is commonly assumed that Bouts entered Roger's workshop before setting up house in Louvain, where he devoted his whole work to the city community of his choice. He had two sons, Dirck and Albert, both painters. In 1473 Bouts married a second, also prosperous, wife. In 1475 he died.

When Bouts came from Holland to Flanders the van der Weyden Studio was at the height of its power and Bouts must have come into close contact with the master. So much is certain from his Granada altarpiece which closely resembles work of Roger's hand. But there is in the whole history of Flemish painting no better example for a complete identity of spirit than

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between Bouts and van der Weyden. Whatever his workshop connection may have been, Bouts lived in the same medieval atmosphere of intense religious devotion as Roger. It has been observed how literally Bouts seemed to emulate not only the spirit, but even the data of his master's life. Like him he married a daughter of his adopted town, rising like him to the position of city painter. Like Roger, he painted an altar of the Holy Sacrament, an Adoration and a Last Judgment, and like him he received the commission from the city council to adorn the new town hall with four pictures illustrating Justice.

In fact and in spirit Bouts has lived Roger's life again, endeavouring to express in paint a perfectly unified medieval picture of the world. "There was nothing in Roger's work and spiritual form that he did not himself fervently desire so to see, feel and create, until he became himself like unto his master." The modern zest for individual greatness has blinded our eye for relations such as these where the identity of the spirit far outweighs in importance the diversity of expression. As long as we grasp the fundamental unity of religious inspiration we may dwell on the differences that gave to Roger his passionate dramatic grouping or to Bouts his isolated, self-contained figures as well as his new earth and his new heaven.

Humanly speaking, Bouts was a burgher, without conception of noble bearing or beauty in his large-headed but Gothic-slender figures, far remote from the tragic grandeur of van der Weyden's monastic aristocracy. Yet in the whole realm of Flemish painting during the middle of the XVth century, there was besides Roger only the one Bouts who, though narrower and less articulate, could express the inner glow of a Christian soul. For Roger as for Bouts,

In the "Ecce Agnus Die" Bouts has clearly emphasized the verticals in the figures of Christ, Baptist and Donor standing parallel to the ascending stream. This Jordan winding its course so placidly through the rocky valley is more like the Flemish Meuse than the Biblical river. It is perhaps the first picture where Bouts has attempted pure landscape, of perfect poise and loveliness. The facial expression of the large foreground figures tells of the spiritual life of the "Devotio Moderna" which the book by Thomas à Kempis on the Imitation of Christ had inspired

The Munich "Resurrection" is in design very nearly identical with that of the Granada altarpiece, attributed to the School of Roger van der Weyden, but now generally given to Bouts. The Gothic verticals are emphasized in the central figure of Christ—mystical, otherworldly, serene—the slender angel with his wings pointed heavenwards and the tiny figure of the Resurrected in the sky. The dazzled soldiers in the near foreground shield themselves somewhat awkwardly from the apparition

and they were the last of their kind, art was still a religion, a Christian devotion, a divine service.

But while Roger's religious sentiment favours the dramatic expression of grief, that of Bouts is lyrical and contemplative, falls short of gesture and action. He sometimes repeats himself. The scheme of the Munich "Resurrection" is the same as in his Granada triptych. His language of form is limited. Malchus, whom Peter strikes down in the "Betrayal," shields himself similarly against the blow as does the soldier in the "Resurrection" against the radiance from the risen Christ. But the "Betrayal" is striking for the variety of facial expression and costume in the closely-packed throng of men and in the remarkable use of moonlight and torchlight. It must be the first night-picture in the history of painting, with the clearly-lit foreground group, as violent as Bouts could make it, and the ghost-like hill, house and spire in the middle distance from where the women are watching the scene. Not till the German Elsheimer painted his moonlight landscapes with the "Flight into Egypt" early in the XVIIth century, has the mystery of night been so effectually used.

Bouts preferred a dignified calm to excessive movement. all his strength lies in the standing figures which face the beholder. His men walk about in "dainty stiffness," dark-haired, sober and serious, yes even a little monotonous, like the chant of the litany which is in their hearts. They are the early Christians of the catacombs or of the cloister, denying the body its due, a strange race of hermits in hair shirt and barefooted, impassive, meek,

The "Betrayal" is striking by its variety of facial expression and costume in the closely-packed throng of men with their harsh angular features and by the remarkable use of moonlight and torchlight. It must be the first night-picture in the history of painting, with the clearly-lit foreground group, as violent as Bouts could make it, and the ghost-like hill, house and spire in the middle distance with the women watching from afar

"La Perle de Brabant" was painted for members of the Snoij family of Malines. It is an unusual composition for Bouts—dainty, elegant, gem-like—where Joseph and not the Madonna is in the centre, standing behind a little round table where he places the glittering gifts from the three wise kings. Here again Bouts vies with Van Eyck in the rendering of radiant metal, chalice and glass. The vista through the Gothic windows and arches is upon rolling countryside with a throng of people in the train of the journeying kings

gentle, sufferers not doers of things. But these faithful ones bestride a resplendent earth, more like the earthly Paradise than the Valley of Death. In his new vision of nature Bouts belonged to the coming age, the age of discovery, the great awakening of the Renaissance, like Dante his spiritual brother, whose penitent sinners walk similar Elysian fields and whose flower-starred meadows and rivulets express a similar mood of exaltation. For it is the mood of the soul that clothes the earth with sundry detail, determines its temper, threatening or serene, festive or melancholy.

Bouts' contemplative spirit revels in loving observation of natural appearance, be it lily or lizard, shrub, rock or tree on winding mountain paths, the blue humidity of distant shores or the nearby crest and groove of moving water. There lies his most exhilarating contribution to painting. For there never was such glowing intensity of colour, such freshness of the greensward,

The National Gallery "Entombment," an early work, shows Bouts under the absorbing influence of Roger van der Weyden. This work was in fact once attributed to Roger and is the most poignant document of his devotional spirit and manner of composition. The type of St. John the Apostle with the mystical inward glance, the weeping women, the compassionate older men are pure Roger. But the landscape—dream-like, airy, spatial—the single tree to give depth to a wide open country, show the poetic transformation which Bouts bestowed upon nature

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such richness and radiance. The very air seems to live and expand in front or behind the figures who help to create a perfect spatial illusion. This atmospheric perspective, "the brilliantly dyed and illuminated heavens" mark an important stage in the history of landscape painting.

As an inventor Bouts firmly leans on the Roger tradition; as an observer of nature he is remarkably independent. From Roger he took the laws of composition, the closely-knit dramatic exaltation of Christian compassion and martyrdom as in our National Gallery Entombment where the unified design as well as the noble restraint in the principal mourners, the weeping women and the expressive St. John are types known from other works of the master. Such coherence and compactness is no attribute of the style of the later Bouts whose designs become more "scattered" as in the Munich picture of the Adoration which belongs to his latest period and has been given by some scholars to his son Dirck Bouts the younger.

The altar is of small proportions and of a gem-like finish, dainty and ornamental as work of the goldsmith's hand. A long train of journeying kings and horsemen approaches the remains of a Romanesque chapel where the eldest king devoutly prays before the Madonna and Child. Joseph, standing behind him, readily receives the gifts of the other noble messengers from the East. Here for once Bouts has adopted a more sumptuous style of clothing, brocaded and jewelled materials, hilted and buckled swords and the pointed shoes of the Knights of the Golden Fleece. Kings and courtiers, as befits the occasion, are of a nobler breed than is usual with Bouts, especially the youngest with his solemn, wistful, far-away look. There is a strong diagonal emphasis in the design and the journey of the kings is happily expressed by the "wave-like up and down" of the travellers. Even here nature is not omitted from the design, guiding the eye from the creeping snail on the foreground wall to the tree-crowned hill and celestial city on the horizon.

The "Adoration" offers a remarkable departure from the archaic humanity, the unrelieved stiffness, the coyness, the abstract symbolism of his figures as we see them in his great altar of the "Last Supper" at Louvain, one of the few works of the master for which we have documentary evidence. It was painted after the death of Roger in 1464 and finished four years after that date. The apostles are sitting stiffly around the rectangular table, gazing spellbound and motionless at the Lord who is the ruling centre of the composition. They might have come from some early mosaic or sarcophagus, so much are they of a type, members of one spiritual family, one Christian brotherhood. The symmetrical order and the simplification of human form and gesture, where Christ presides hieratically over his disciples is far nearer to Angelico and to Giotto than to Jan van Eyck, from whom Bouts has been derived by our greatest authorities.

Bouts remains besides Roger, his greater master, the foremost medievalist among the Primitives of the Flemish School. His was a deeply religious personality. Christian doctrine and imagery were for him the centre of his existence. He was filled by a primitive strength of faith which so formed and ruled his whole outlook that the monastic and ascetic aspect of the apostolic age received from him its pictorial expression. In Bouts, as in Dante, Giotto or St. Francis, the very spirit of the Middle Ages comes palpably to life. Nature is not excluded from their celestial dreams, and Dante walking by the River Lethe or Eunoe conjures up at once the vision of Bouts' river banks and streams. Nor does his sentiment of nature differ from that of St. Francis, who in his canticle praises the Lord for all the earth and its fruit and coloured flowers and grass.

The Flemish patrimony of painting was infinitely enriched by his bold discovery of space, his new and saturated intensity of colour, his glowing ruby and emerald, his Mediterranean blue, his sparkling, glittering freshness, his sun-warmed atmosphere and gentle breezes, his masterly gradations of colour and light. Although his appreciation of light and his skill of rendering in paint the minutiae of natural appearance may link him with the school of van Eyck, his devotional strength, his steadfast clinging to his medieval conception of men and to his vision of the Lord's Passion, show him in spiritual brotherhood with that master of the southern Netherlands who during the XVth century determined the type and the composition of devotional painting throughout Western Europe: Roger van der Weyden. To him he owed the firm basis of his existence as man and as artist, his whole work bears witness to that—even to the stiffening of his rhythm and his bodily form—and it matters little whether his pigments were more luminous and his landscapes more lyrical than we find in the heroic condensations of Roger's religious canvases. Bouts was of his spirit, and with different approach and with different endowments, his devoutest and greatest disciple.

Much of his early life is conjecture. Sir Charles Holmes assumes a connection with Robert Campin at Tournai as early as 1425, two years even before Roger van der Weyden entered the workshop of the Master of Flemalle. He observed the same native force, the same richness of colour, the same manner of drawing hands in Campin's Madonna as in the London "Virgin and Child" by Dirck Bouts, one of the fairest of all Flemish Madonnas. When Roger van der Weyden set up his own workshop at Brussels in 1435, Bouts may well have been his principal assistant. Twelve years later his marriage with wealthy Catherine van der Brugghen, known as Mettengelde, is recorded at Louvain. How long his association with Roger lasted cannot be defined. So much is certain, that it was a self-imposed and lifelong bondage of the smaller to the greater master.

The subservience of his great natural gifts to Roger's high-pitched language of form gives to the figure-compositions of Bouts a touching sense of the primitive and the naïve. "Through all his work there peeps out a type of man with short legs and a large head, ungainly, yet full of rude character whom we recognise as the ancestor of the Dutch peasant, immortalized two hundred years later by Brouwer and Teniers and Ostade" (Holmes). So true it is that Bouts without ever wavering in his spiritual loyalties, firmly maintained his native colour and strength, attaining to true greatness by his devoutly personal *sacrifizio dell' intelletto*.

Whether or not he was "fundamentally incapable" of reproducing Roger's spirit, as at least one modern critic has remarked, avails little in an age when all art was conceived *ad majorem Dei gloriam*, and his particular gifts for colour and landscape served as well in the medieval picture of the world as another's high-minded expression of Christian mysticism or martyrdom.

Literature on Dirck Bouts—M. J. Friedlaender: *Die Altniederlaendische Malerei*, Vol. 3, 1925. Sir Martin Conway: *The Van Eycks and their Followers*, 1921, Chapter XII. F. Baudouin: *L'Ecce Agnus Dei de Dieric Bouts*. (Les Arts Plastiques. 3/4. 1948.) Editions de la Connaissance. Bruxelles.

COVER PLATE

THE re-opening of the Constable rooms at the Victoria and Albert Museum reminds us anew—if we were in any danger of forgetting—what a great master Constable was, and how painstakingly he arrived at his eventual vision and power of expressing it.

This picture, now on exhibition at Leggatt's Galleries in St. James's, shows us a typical phase of that journey. Constable in the early Suffolk period owed much to Girtin, essaying in small oils the wide-spreading panoramas which would have appealed as subjects to the brilliant youth who, born practically at the same time, had run his course before his emulator had got into stride. From Girtin, Constable took that breadth and simplicity, and his early colour schemes of dark greens, browns and purples. From him he learned to see wide, open landscapes in terms of compositions which stretched in series of horizontal almost parallel lines from side to side of his canvas. The time was to come when he would abandon all this, having taken from it the qualities which he needed. But before that happened he was often looking at Dedham Vale and other aspects of his beloved Suffolk through the eyes of Thomas Girtin.

This picture is precisely one of these Girtinesque visions. The golden brown foreground, the vast interwoven middle distance giving play to the sunshine and shadow which were destined to become Constable's theme, the sky majestic in the massed cumulus clouds: all this might have been put down in the swift immediate water-colour of Girtin. Constable carried it forward to the solidity of oils. The high-toned gable-end of the distant house (almost his signature in so much of this early work) served, too, with the cluster of the roofs to break what might otherwise have been monotony. The majesty of the vast cloud-mass, lighted on its near side, purple in its recession, makes it difficult to realise that this is a comparatively small canvas.

The picture was in the hands of Messrs. Leggatt some years ago and has now again come into their possession. It is being shown in their Autumn Exhibition of Old Masters.

Jakob Helkis and Du Paquier Porcelain—IV

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT IN VIENNA

NO definite answer can yet be given to the problem as to the part played by Jakob Helkis in the Vienna factory of Claude Innocentius Du Paquier. We are still unable to state with certainty how long he spent in Vienna, and apart from the signed pieces that exist, which may be the result of his presumed activities as a Hausmaler, the only documentary evidence that connects him with the Vienna factory dates from the year 1746, after the Du Paquier undertaking had been taken over by the State. The signed pieces can only be accepted as proof that he had access to Du Paquier porcelain in the white and do not prove that he was a factory painter ; on the contrary the presence of a signature on a piece of XVIIIth century porcelain is often regarded as an indication that it is the work either of a decorator outside the factory, or of a factory painter working privately.

According to the article on Helkis in the Thieme-Becker Künstler-Lexikon, he was born in Trieste, and was first employed in the porcelain factory at Turin, whence he was dismissed for causing damage to the porcelain through mistakes in mixing the colours and in firing them. The same authority states that he then went to Vienna, where he remained for a considerable time, working at the Du Paquier factory, until in 1747 he was summoned to Bavaria to take part in the foundation of the Neudeck (later Nymphenburg) factory. Unfortunately, not even this much can be accepted at its face value. In the first place, the porcelain factory near Turin, at Vinovo, was not established until the 1770's. There is in fact a very important collection of Du Paquier at Turin in the Museo Civico, including some pieces which have been attributed to Helkis but they were first brought there in the XIXth century. Faience has long been produced in Turin, but there seems to be no ground for thinking that Helkis should have worked there as a decorator of faience. The most likely explanation of this peculiar error is that for "Turin" one should read "Venice."

Although it may be a reasonable assumption that Helkis spent some considerable time in Vienna, and I propose to deal with this point later, it is no more than a likely guess. What we do know is that when in 1746 he married in Vienna, he was described in the church register as a widower, living in the porcelain factory. There are three grounds for thinking that Helkis worked at Vienna for at any rate a period of years. Firstly, when he went to Neudeck, he was appointed Werkmeister, a position of seniority that would only have been given to an artist of considerable experience. Secondly, his manner of painting is clearly derived from the famous Silesian Hausmaler, Ignaz Bottengruber, who is known to have been working in Vienna, perhaps at the factory, in and shortly after 1730. If Helkis drew his inspiration direct from the older master, he must have been in Vienna also by the early 'thirties, unless, of course, he went at any stage to Breslau. The third ground for presuming a lengthy period in Vienna is the fact that a considerable number of pieces of Du Paquier have survived painted in the style that we associate with Helkis.

Fig. I. TWO-HANDLED CUP, decorated in Schwarzlot and signed on the cover "Jacobus Helchis fecit." *British Museum*

Fig. II. COVER to the cup above

Fig. III. CUP, COVER AND STAND, painted by Helkis in polychrome. *Victoria and Albert Museum*

There are four pieces in existence that bear his signature in a latinized version : all are decorated in Schwarzlot. Both Braun and Pazaurek have hazarded further attributions to him and I propose to make other attributions myself. It might be considered that these four pieces would provide a basis for many further attributions. Unfortunately, one is known to us only through a description in Chaffers, who thought it was Venetian porcelain from the Vezzi factory. The description he gives of it enables us to add it to the other Du Paquier decorated by Helkis : "an écuelle painted in Indian ink with a naked boy looking through a telescope and extensive landscape, rococo border, etched in lines as from an engraving, signed 'Jakobus Helchis fecit.' From the J. Sander's collection." The present whereabouts of the piece are unknown.

Two of the other signed pieces, namely a two-handled cup and cover in the British Museum, and a very similar one in the Oest. Museum, Vienna, are of quite exceptional quality. They bear the same signature as the écuelle referred to by Chaffers, and the fact that they are signed suggests a special commission. It would not be

Fig. IV. MUG, painted in polychrome, probably the work of Helkis. *Victoria and Albert Museum*

reasonable to expect the whole of his output to maintain so high a standard and we cannot regard them as necessarily typical of his usual manner. In Figs. I and II are illustrated two views of the British Museum cup. It shows a taste for highly-romanticised landscape with strong contrasts of light and shade. The scenes are drawn with a very fine point, not painted with a brush. The figure of a Putto on the cover is, however, produced by means of a technique of stippling. The signature "Jacobus Helchis fecit" appears in a comparatively prominent position on the upper side of the cover. It will be noticed that the elaborate strapwork, so characteristic of the later Du Paquier porcelain, is absent.

The second cup and cover, which form a pair to that illustrated in Fig. I, do not differ in essentials, but are accompanied by a dish painted also in Schwarzlot by the same hand. It has, however, the typical Vienna strapwork border and appears to have become associated with the cup and cover at a later date. With these two sets of cup and cover, it is possible to connect the extremely beautiful cup, cover and stand in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Fig. III). Here we have Putto subjects and the typical Vienna décor painted in the style associated with the last decade of the factory. These latter pieces are of cardinal importance in the study of Helkis, although they are unsigned, firstly because they show Helkis working in polychrome, and secondly because of their typical factory colour range and border design. They can be accepted with confidence as factory work, and as proving that Helkis was employed in the factory at the time it was still under the control of Du Paquier. The stippled treatment of the figures, which I commented on with reference to the Schwarzlot decorated cups, can also be recognised in the figures on these pieces and is a further indication of their common origin. There are in the Oest. Museum, Vienna, a number of dishes decorated in Schwarzlot with Putto subjects within Baroque borders. These pieces can be ascribed to Helkis, and are also apparently factory productions. The lightness and freedom of the treatment of the borders suggests a date when the solemn Baroque ornament was beginning to give way to the more adventurous Rococo. We have now established a corpus of works by Helkis, all decorated with Putto subjects, mostly in Schwarzlot, but also in colours. It is tempting to go on and attribute all Putto subjects on Du Paquier porcelain to him, but here one must tread with great circumspection.

Du Paquier porcelain came into the hands of the Hausmaler in some quantity, and precisely these Putto subjects were particularly favoured by the Breslau Hausmaler, Ignaz Bottengruber, and his two pupils, C. F. von Wolfsburg and H. G. von Bressler. Not only did Bottengruber decorate Vienna porcelain, but he even worked for a time in Vienna. This is proved by the cup and saucer in the Oest. Museum which bears the signature, "I. Bottengruber f. Viennae 1730."[1] This is apparently a piece painted outside the factory and there is still no definite evidence to support the view that either he or his followers were ever employed there. On the other hand, it is necessary to examine Du Paquier porcelain decorated with Putto subjects with great care, since Helkis himself was perhaps a pupil of Bottengruber and clearly modelled his style upon that of the latter. Thus the stippling which we have noticed in his work is equally a characteristic of Bottengruber. The question of attribution cannot be decided purely on the basis of quality since a decorator's work was often very unequal according to the importance of any particular commission he was executing. While those pieces decorated with Putto subjects alone may be the work of Helkis, Bottengruber, Wolfsburg or Bressler, where the subject is accompanied by the factory "Laub- und Bandelwerk" border or where the painting shows the characteristic limited but delicate colour range of the factory, we can probably recognise the hand of Helkis.

Fig. V. CUP AND COVER decorated in polychrome, attributed to Helkis. *Property of Mr. H. Bäcker*

Fig. VI. CUP, COVER AND STAND painted in lilac monochrome, probably by Helkis. *Museo Civico, Turin*

The reference to the "factory" border requires further elaboration: a dish by Wolfsburg, decorated in purple monochrome, has a palmette and scrollwork border that was probably inspired by this factory border. I have not, however, seen Hausmaler pieces with quite the typical Du Paquier border seen in Fig. III. Attributions to Helkis must therefore be restricted to pieces with an undoubted factory border. There are examples decorated with Putto subjects in the collections of Vienna (Oest. Museum), Turin (Museo Civico) and Hamburg (Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe)[2]; others are illustrated in the Sale Catalogue of the Lanna Collection of Prague, dispersed in 1911.[3] Some vary in quality so far from the signed Helkis works that one hesitates to attribute them to him. It is only reasonable to expect that a fair number of pieces of Du Paquier painted by him would exist. On the other hand, Putto subjects were very generally used by XVIIIth century porcelain decorators and there may have been another factory painter in this genre.

handling of the flesh on this cup and cover and on the mug, Fig. IV, in particular, the contrast between light and shade which gives an impression of almost excessive muscular development in the figures. Another border-line case is the chamber-pot in the Oest. Museum,[4] ascribed by Braun to the factory, but which might well be by Bottengruber.

I have concentrated so far on one aspect only of the Helkis manner, namely Putto subjects. In fact, however, these appear only on the covers of the signed cups and the cups themselves are decorated with landscapes. As at present arranged in the British Museum, the Helkis cup (Fig. I) is set next to another Du Paquier cup and cover, also decorated with landscape, but in purple monochrone (Fig. VII). One cannot help being impressed with the similarity of the handling of the landscape drawn with a fine point, particularly in the cloud construction. The main distinction is that the signed piece is considerably more ambitious—our eye is led up the romantic valley to a hill in the

Fig. VII. CUP AND COVER, painted with designs after Hollar in crimson monochrome. *British Museum*

Fig. VIII. CUP AND COVER, painted with landscapes in crimson monochrome. *Oest. Museum, Vienna*

It is not possible to generalise about such pieces and each must be considered on its own merits. Amongst those which are probably the work of Helkis is the small mug in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Fig. IV). The painting is executed in the same stippled manner described above, the colour range is very similar to that of the cup, cover and stand in Fig. III. The only unfamiliar feature is the staring gaze of the children's eyes. This is not a mannerism that appears on the signed pieces and might therefore suggest another hand. There are at Vienna and elsewhere a number of pieces painted with Putti amongst garlands in a design borrowed from the ceiling decoration of the Gold-Kabinett in the Upper Belvedere palace in Vienna. These show similar characteristics, and appear to be the work of Helkis. An example in private possession is shown in Fig. V.

The cup and cover with stand illustrated in Fig. VI provide a good example of the difficulty of distinguishing the work of Helkis from that of his contemporaries. It is decorated in purple monochrome and is in the Museo Civico, Turin. The ornament around the pineapple-shaped finial of the cover is distinctly like factory work, the stippled technique recalls Helkis and the trees on the dish are painted in precisely the same way as those on the Victoria and Albert dish, Fig. III. The subject is on the other hand quite in the style of Bressler, only the execution is perhaps finer. I am inclined nevertheless to give this piece to Helkis: the attribution is somewhat supported by the similar background crowned by a lofty castle. In the case of the other piece, which is unsigned and bears the factory ornament, such ambitious essays in perspective are not attempted and the fortified town is only slightly set back. A comparison is, however, quite convincing—they are by the same hand, and Helkis must be studied not only as a painter of Putto subjects but also of landscape. In the Oest. Museum there is another bowl and cover, also decorated with a landscape in crimson, which may be attributed to Jakob Helkis (Fig. VIII). In the case of these landscapes with buildings, it is evident that he has relied on engravings either by or in the style of Wenzeslaus Hollar, some hundred years earlier than the cups, which date from after 1730. The technique of drawing and hatching with a fine point which Helkis made particularly his own, rendered possible the most effective reproduction of the engravings he copied.

There is one further piece signed by him to be considered. Actually it only bears the monogram J.H., but there seems to be no valid reason for rejecting it from the Helkis oeuvre. It is one of the dishes with the Jagd-Service border, and is now, with its unsigned companion piece, in the Oest. Museum. It was formerly in the Sammlung Rothberger. An excellent illustration of it appeared in Hoffman—Porzellan Manufaktur Nymphenburg, Vol. I, Fig. 24. It is a difficult piece to account for, since it has a coarseness that is foreign to the rest of the Helkis oeuvre. My own theory (see also Part III of this series, APOLLO, August,

1948) is that it and its companion were made as replacers for the Jagd-Service, and that Helkis intentionally copied the coarse technique of this service, the original parts of which date from an earlier period in the factory's history. Both Braun and Pazaurek go on to attribute the whole of the Jagd-Service to Helkis, and therefore date it as *circa* 1735, i.e. as one of the later productions of the factory. We have, however, the evidence of the catalogue of the Oest. Museum that the Jagd-Service was in fact the first service made at the factory. In any case, a careful comparison of the coarse but effective decoration of the Jagd-Service with the fine technique of Helkis' signed works surely makes its attribution to him out of the question—except of course for the two later replacers, the scenes on which do in any case differ quite materially from those on the early Jagd-Service, both in composition and, in particular, in the treatment of the landscape detail. On the earlier pieces, the subject is essentially the wild beast that is hunted and the landscape is merely inserted to fill in the corners. In the case of the two Helkis plates, the scenes are carefully composed and thought out, and the landscape background is of almost equal importance with the figures in the foreground.

Pazaurek[5] lists certain pieces with the same design as the Jagd-Service, such as the Liechtenstein pieces at Schloss Feldsberg and two tureens in the Lanna Collection,[6] and these also he attributes to Helkis. These had presumably become separated from the main corpus of the service preserved in the monastery of Sankt Paul in Lavanttal, Carinthia. When he published his great work in 1923, Pazaurek was not aware that so much of the service still survived in the Carinthian monastery. On the basis of these attributions, he also makes the far less likely suggestion that the big wine-cooler at Turin, illustrated in Part III of this series, Figs. I and Ia, is the work of Helkis. The object was probably only known to him from the small-size illustration in Folnesics and Braun, but it is in fact very different from the signed Helkis pieces. The colour is not applied with a point but with broad brush strokes. The effect is very coarse and the cooler seems in any case to date from an earlier period in the factory's history than that with which we associate Helkis.

Summing up, Helkis' work is so similar to that of Bottengruber that he must be placed with Wolfsburg and Bressler as a pupil of the Breslau master. His work not only surpassed that of the two latter decorators but rivalled that of his master. Bottengruber is known to have been in Vienna in and presumably for some time after 1730. It seems likely that Helkis' period at the factory dates therefore from the early or mid-'thirties. He may well have begun as a Hausmaler. Quite a number of pieces survive which might be attributed to him, and allowing for lost and broken pieces, one might well consider that he worked in the factory from some time in the 'thirties until it was taken over by the State in 1744. Pieces by him exist with the characteristic factory border, confirming that he did in fact work in the factory. The two Schwarzlot cups and covers look, however, more like the work of a Hausmaler, especially in view of the full and prominent signature. They may have been produced as private commissions while he was employed at the factory. All the examples which I would attribute to him seem on a basis of style criticism to date from the 1730's or later. As an artist, Helkis is more satisfying as a landscape painter than in his Putto subjects which often display a sentimental sweetness that foreshadows the end of the great period of Austrian Baroque.

[1]Illustrated in Pazaurek, *Deutsche Fayence und Porzellan Hausmaler*, Vol. I, Plate 15.

[2]Example illustrated in *Cicerone*, Vol. XV, facing p. 89.

[3]Sale Catalogue, Part I, Lot Nos. 1429, 1424, 1425.

[4]Illustrated in *Folnesics und Braun*, p. 34.

[5]*Op. cit.*, p. 236.

[6]Illustrated in Sale Catalogue, Part II, Plate 69, Lots 964, 965.

STAFFORDSHIRE FIGURE AND SLIPWARE FIGURINE

C.E.A. (Torquay). (1) You do not state whether your figure of a "lady seated on a mound reading a book, with tree background" is decorated with translucent glazes or with on-glaze enamel colours, but from your description it appears to be a characteristic late XVIIIth century or early XIXth century Staffordshire figure made by one of the innumerable plagiarists of the Enoch Wood/Walton School.

I have never heard of a metal clip inserted under the glaze and unfortunately have not been able to follow your diagram. You state, however, that part of the clip is obscured by the colour or glaze. This, with the fact that you found tiny particles of silver elsewhere on the figure would seem to suggest that it was partly decorated with silver lustre. This was not an uncommon form of pottery decoration on figures in the early XIXth century. The use of lustres dates from the end of the XVIIIth century but most of the known examples date from about 1810 onwards. Figures completely decorated in silver lustre were made by Wood & Caldwell, as also pieces partly enamelled and partly picked out in silver lustre (shields, bow and arrow, etc.). Other firms using the lustre process in Staffordshire were Bailey & Batkin, the elder Salt, Wilson, etc. As a form of ceramic decoration it was entirely unsuited to modelled pieces, tending always to obscure form, but when applied sparingly it was effective particularly when used to convey the appearance of real solid metal.

(2) The slipware figurine is difficult to place without an illustration but it is not likely to be by Dwight. All the authentic figures by John Dwight are in the great museums. They are all of a distinctive character, finely modelled with sharp clean characterization suggesting the work of a carver rather than a modeller, with beautifully wrought accessories or details such as hair, lace, jewellery, flowers. With the exception of the inscribed death-portrait of Lydia Dwight, the potter's little daughter, they are unmarked. All have an unmistakable air of quality, hence their attribution to Grinling Gibbons, the wood-carver, while still a young sculptor. They are not slip decorated earthenwares but grey or bronze-coloured stonewares. Moreover they are the unduplicated originals of the artist.

The description which you give, "Lady with cat on lap, seated in high-backed chair," suggests a mid-XVIIIth century image-toy but without an accurate description of style-mannerisms it is difficult to be precise. Your diagram of marks I was unable to interpret in the way suggested, indeed I found it quite undecipherable. Remembering, too, that your figurine is no more than 3½ inches high, the suggestion that "even cats' whiskers read 1675 !" seemed a trifle incongruous.

AN UNUSUAL CANDLESTICK

M.C. (Hesketh Bank). *Delft candlestick supported by two lightly-draped figures, decorated in blue, red-brown and yellow.* This is a most curious and unusual piece, and even your excellent drawing has failed to enable us to locate a duplicate. It is quite safe to assume that it is not *delft ;* that ware was made from a yellow or reddish clay coated with a tin enamel, often distinguished by a pinkish colour, due to the body showing through. The term *delft* is often carelessly applied to any kind of glazed earthenware. It seems most probable, from your drawing and description, that your piece is of Staffordshire origin ; it is not possible to give a more exact location. It is apparently lead-glazed, and from the relative paucity of colouring would belong rather to the later than to the earlier periods, probably towards the end of the XVIIIth century or early in the XIXth. It would be necessary to have fuller details of the construction of the article, for instance whether the base is hollow or closed in, before a closer estimate of its origin could be hazarded, if even then, for the wares of this period, when many potters were at work in Staffordshire, are not at all easy to differentiate.

BONBONNIERE

Porcelain snuff-box shaped as a cock and a hen. This is much more likely to be a *bonbonnière*, and is probably French, not English. Mennecy bonbonnières generally have a porcelain lid and a silver mount ; Chelsea specimens usually have a lid of enamel. The mark, of two batons with a cross bar, all in blue, has not been identified, except that Samson, the Parisian imitator, used just such a mark, but generally with the addition of a letter S. When the Meissen mark, with which it purports to cause confusion, has a cross bar, it is incised, showing that the piece was sold undecorated. A modern specimen, by comparison with a genuine article, apart from considerations of paste and glaze, usually looks rather crude and muddy in colouring, often with an emphasis on dark outlines to such things as leaves, feathers, etc. It is to be feared that the opinion on your specimen, in the absence of actual examination, is that it is not of XVIIIth century origin and is most probably a comparatively modern French imitation.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ROBERT HANCOCK, The Life and Work of. CYRIL COOK. (Chapman & Hall. 42s.)

ENGLISH CERAMIC CIRCLE : TRANSACTIONS. No. 10. Vol. 2. (£2 2s.)

TAZZA

THERE is much indiscriminate use of the word "Tazza" particularly in its application to silver ware, and it is commonly used to describe many different objects which seem to be unrelated as regards material, shape, and purpose.

To mention only a few, various drinking vessels, salvers, cake stands, dishes, fruit stands, sweetmeat dishes, patens and chalices. The materials of which they are made are just as numerous, and if these are extended beyond the metals, cooking vessels, fountain basins, and several other objects have been described similarly.

If its derivatives and cognate words in various languages be taken into account then it may include such objects as sword hilts, champagne glasses, tea cups, goblets, bowls, and the like. It will be appreciated that the whole difficulty of relating the word to the form lies in the lack of *descriptive* or pictorial illustration of its meaning, particularly at any early period. It is perfectly true that the generally accepted form in some of its varieties may be shown pictorially but obviously this is of no value as evidence unless the word "Tazza" is attached as a contemporary description of the object, and even if this should be the case it is possible that at any given period variations both in form and purpose might prove to be just as wide as they are at the present day.

The word itself in the form Tazza seems to be Italian and probably derived from the medieval Latin Tassa which occurs as early as 1337. There are, however, so many forms in existence which may have had a common origin that it will not do to be too dogmatic in this case.

Whatever the origin of the word, it has a very wide distribution, and although spelt in various ways and certainly subject to many variations of pronunciation, yet its forms and meanings are reasonably alike in most of the countries where it is in use. Translated into English, Tazza means a cup, mug, flat tumbler, or the basin of a fountain, and it is to be observed that none of these words has a restricted meaning as to the shape of the object or the material of which it was made, and though three of its meanings are confined to drinking vessels, the fourth is not, thus in the original the purpose is a dual one. In Spanish there is the word Taza which may be translated as cup, bowl, the basin of a fountain, or the cup guard of a sword. The Portuguese form, Taça, means a cup or a champagne glass, while in medieval English the word occurs as Tassa in 1483 and is used in the sense of a cup or goblet, and in Old French the word Tasse in use about 1380 meant a goblet, but the same word in modern French denotes a cup, as it does in German. In Arabic it is found in the form Tass or Tassah, meaning a basin, while the equivalent of the Persian Tast would seem to be a cup or goblet. In Esthonian Tass is used for a cup, while Tásh in Hindustani is cup or goblet among other things. There are probably more examples of the word or its derivatives to be found, but perhaps enough have been cited to afford some evidence that the class of object indicated was generally a drinking vessel of some form, but what its shape may have been at any given date is not easy to determine.

It may be noted that while the word Tasse occurs in the XVth and XVIth centuries in England, it seems to have subsequently gone out of use possibly because the type of vessel to which it was attached ceased to be commonly employed.

So much, then, for the distribution of the word or its derivatives, and obviously it would be very difficult to attempt to decide the source of the various forms and furthermore to relate any of them to a definite type of drinking vessel, with the exception perhaps of the Italian and Portuguese words which indicate a particular pattern.

The shapes of drinking vessels are so numerous and so widely distributed that even if a specialised form could be proved to exist in every country where any variant of the word Tassa or Tazza is to be found in the language, this could not be regarded as conclusive, because most primitive forms follow the natural shapes into which any material was most easily converted. Variations, imitations, and adaptations both of material and shape, generally from the simple to the more complex, follow naturally but are probably true only of a specific epoch and locality.

The first mention of the word Tazza it has been possible to trace in English occurs in 1841 when it was apparently used to distinguish some form of vessel other than a vase, but unfortunately it does not seem that any record is extant as to the type of object it denoted.

About 1871, a Victorian novelist apparently describing some young woman of an abandoned type, says that "she was seen to take up her large tazza glass and dispose of its contents," indicating that he at any rate used the term to describe a drinking vessel of glass; no hint, however, is given as to its shape.

Down to 1877 the distinction between a vase and a tazza still persisted and mention has been found of "beautiful tazzas of jasper, lapis-lazuli, and malachite," and later on a fine green jade tazza shaped dish is mentioned but no indication of what they were like is available.

The next occasion of its use seems to have been about 1878 in the catalogue of glass vessels, South Kensington Museum, where one of them is described as a "Tazza bowl" and if the meaning of the term be translated it can mean cup bowl, mug bowl, or flat tumbler bowl, which does not seem to advance the matter very greatly.

It was not until about ten years later that the word was again noted and here possibly its usage was on a sounder basis, because the form of the object so designated was illustrated. General Pitt Rivers, in his excavations at Rotherley, found some earthenware vessels of Romano-British origin and applies the term Tazza to them, and although great respect should be paid to his opinion, yet it is curious to find that he describes and illustrates several distinct types of vessel, which were apparently used for very diverse purposes.

The first of these is a shallow pottery bowl with a large flange

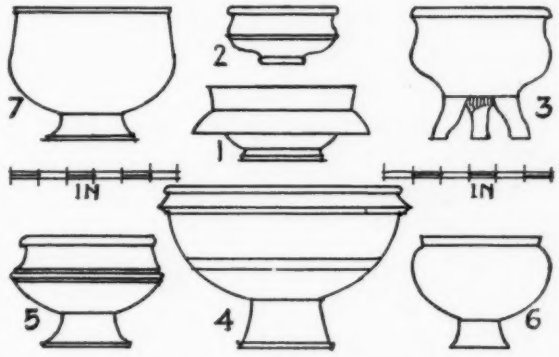

Fig. A. Diagram of ROMANO-BRITISH Pottery Vessels

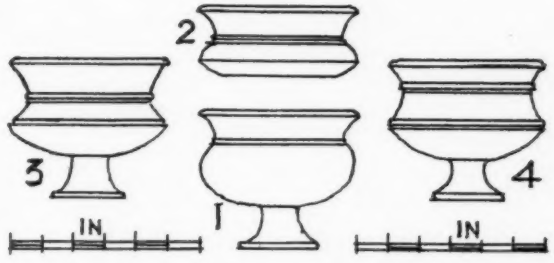

Fig. B. Diagram of ROMANO-BRITISH Pottery Vessels

and this he suggests was a cooking vessel and used on a metal tripod (Fig. A.1); then comes a small moulded bowl of about 4 inches diameter and 2 inches high without a stem (Fig. A.2), followed by a flat bowl-shaped vessel measuring 5 inches or so in diameter, supported on three feet (Fig. A.3), apparently for use over a charcoal fire. Next a hemispherical bowl with a moulded lip and a well-marked hollow stem (Fig. A.4), the bottom of the bowl being pierced with a hole. Here, then, are four vessels of varying types apparently used for as many different purposes. A well-designed shallow moulded bowl with a very marked trumpet stem (Fig. A.5) is also described as a Tazza,

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while two simple globular-shaped vessels with moulded lips and rather rudimentary stems have the same designation (Figs. A.6 and 7).

A very similar type found at Billericay is recorded in 1896 (Fig. B.1), although not described as a Tazza, and it is not until 1912 that another instance of the term being so applied has come to my notice. Three pottery vessels found at Welwyn are thus designated, but very probably because they resembled in form and size the examples discovered by Pitt Rivers, the first a shallow moulded bowl without a stem (Fig. B.2) and the other two very similar in shape but slightly more elaborate and having well-defined trumpet stems (Figs. B.3 and 4). They were about 4 to 5 inches in diameter at the lip and those with stems stand about 4½ inches high. All these were of Romano-British origin and have an undoubted affinity with similar vessels found in Italy. From their size and shape they seem with one exception (Fig. B.2) to be stemmed drinking bowls and may be legitimately described by the term Tazza used in its restricted sense.

It wil. be noted that so far as it has been possible to trace the use and application of the term in English, from the date of its adoption there has been some considerable confusion as to what the term actually meant, and of recent years it has been so extended that more and more unrelated types made for very diverse purposes have been included.

The definitions of the term given in the standard dictionaries are not very helpful as they appear to have been copied from some source which it does not seem possible to trace. There is, however, a general agreement that it was a shallow ornamental bowl or vase, probably one supported on a foot, but this definition evades the point as to whether it was a drinking vessel, and ignores the question of the stem and other features. In its simplest form a drinking vessel of the stemmed type consists of a bowl and a stem, there may be in addition a cover to the bowl, and the stem may be knopped and provided with a foot. The bowl is generally held to be shallow, and there is no reason why it should not be perfectly plain. It may also be noted that in most cases a bowl has a rudimentary stem or foot rim upon which it rests, and by varying the width and depth of this and altering its form any variety of stemmed bowl may be evolved. Is it possible in the face of such evidence as can be found to arrive at some definition which will limit the meaning of the word to an object of a specific form and purpose? It may be agreed that the word Tazza is Italian and the translation of that word is cup, mug or flat tumbler, and so far as it has been possible to trace no other meaning *thus limited* is allowable in that language. Clearly then in its native sense it indicates a drinking vessel, without in any way defining the shape except that it hints that it was of a flat form at any rate as regards the bowl.

Can it then be defined as "a stemmed drinking vessel with a shallow bowl" which does not preclude its having a cover to the bowl, or a knop and foot to the stem?

It is evident that some process of evolution must have taken place in order to arrive at the vessel in question in its most advanced form, and if it be assumed that the logical development was from the simple to the more complex, then so far as the type in metal is concerned the matter would appear to be fairly straightforward.

Starting with the plain bowl of segmental section (Fig. C.1), the first step would be some form of foot rim in order to maintain stability when filled with liquid and placed on a smooth surface (Fig. C.2); this rim probably at first separate would in due course be soldered to the underside of the bowl. Examples of the survival of this detached rim occur in the so-called potato rings of Ireland and also in some types of Chinese bowls. The silver potato ring usually supported a wooden bowl and those of China were usually of porcelain.

A bowl of even moderate size filled with liquid is not an easy object to handle, and it is probable that the next step was to attach a smaller inverted one to the base of the larger (Fig. C.3) to afford some sort of a hand grip. Once this had been done it is easy to see how the smaller could be varied in shape (Fig. C.4) and how the combination of three bowls would be a further step (Fig. C.5). A form that has not come to my notice in metal,

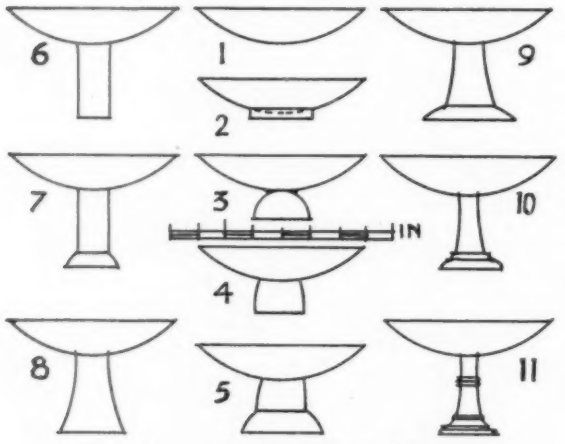

Fig. C. Diagram showing evolution of the stemmed drinking vessel

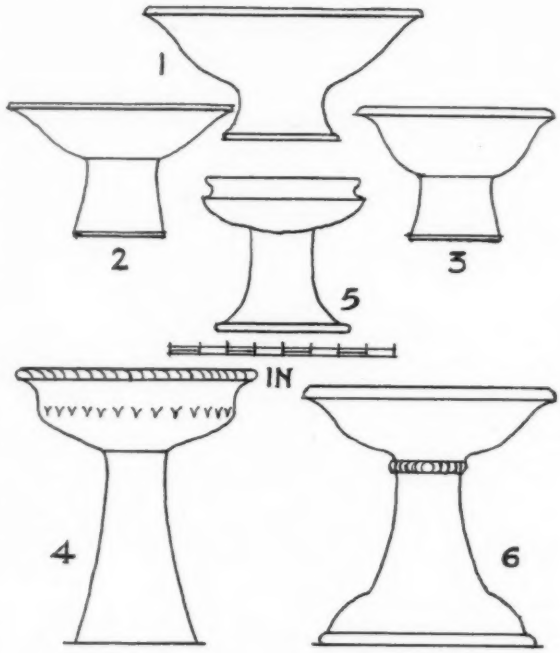

Fig. D. Diagram of stemmed drinking vessels in pottery from Egypt

though not unusual in earthenware or porcelain, is the plain cylindrical stem (Fig. C.6) which would naturally lead to the combination of bowl, cylindrical stem, and bowl foot (Fig. C.7), although it is quite possible that the trumpet stem may have been the earlier (Fig. C.8). The next step would involve the addition of the bowl base or foot to the trumpet stem (Fig. C.9) and then probably the fining down of the stem and the introduction of a knop (Figs. C.10 and 11). It is of course difficult to form any opinion as to when a cover was first provided, but at any rate no further form modification of major importance seems to have taken place other than variations in the decorative features. It should be mentioned that it is not unusual to find the interior of the bowl enriched with chasing in the case of silver, and painting or enamelling in that of porcelain or pottery.

It has already been noted that a form of stemmed drinking vessel was in use amongst the Romans and Romano-Britons and other examples can be found from many localities in the Eastern Mediterranean. This is particularly true of Egypt where the type occurs at a comparatively early date although specimens are not very numerous. An example from Riqqeh has a plain flattened bowl with a moulded lip and a rather short trumpet stem and is of a pleasing form (Fig. D.1), while another with a

shallower bowl and a more fully-developed stem is also from the same locality (Fig. D.2). Both are of pottery and may be ascribed to the XIIth dynasty or about 2000 B.C., and while their shapes are logically pottery forms, yet with very slight modifications they could be reproduced in metal without doing violence to the limitations imposed by the material. Another from Tarkhan is to be noted although owing to the equality of division between bowl and stem it has far less appeal than the previous examples (Fig. D.3). It has an ogee bowl with a plain lip moulding, a rather squat trumpet stem with a simple quarter-round at the foot.

The excavations at Abydos have yielded specimens in pottery, some of which are rather rudimentary in character, although well finished and fired, while others are more especially interesting and as they are probably of the XIIth to the XVIIIth dynasties 2000-1350 B.C., afford quite early examples of the stemmed bowl form. A very pleasant cup with shallow ogee-shaped bowl and well-shaped trumpet stem has a simple rope-like lip and some incised decoration on the swell of the bowl (Fig. D.4). It stands about 9⅜ ins. high and has an extreme width at the lip of 8⅜ ins. or thereabouts, and if due allowance be made for the fact that it is made of pottery it compares very well with the slimmer and perhaps more delicate examples in metal. Another smaller one about 5½ ins. high by 3 ins. wide has a simply-moulded bowl and a well-marked trumpet stem with a half-round bead at the foot (Fig. D.5). A further example from the same site has a flat ogee-shaped bowl with a quarter-round lip, a pleasantly emphatic trumpet stem with a half-round bead at the foot, and a semi-circular beaded knop placed at the junction of the bowl and stem is perfectly logical from the constructional point of view and is the earliest example of this feature that has been brought to my notice (Fig. D.6). In the metal examples this knop is generally found about halfway down the stem and is usually decorative in character. This stemmed form does not seem to have been in use in Assyria at any rate as late as about 880 B.C. Without being a common type these drinking vessels with a shallow bowl were very widely distributed throughout the ancient world, and survived probably by direct descent in many countries of the Near East. Vessels of this type probably of the XIIth century A.D. with decoration on the interior of the bowl and of Persian origin are to be found in pottery with a great variety of designs and glazes. About the same time there was also in use a cup with a rather deeper bowl and a shorter stem, in some cases decorated in a similar fashion. Metal examples are probably rare, particularly those of an early date, due no doubt to the fact that the country has been fought over many times and been very thoroughly looted.

India has produced some examples in metal but they are not common, apparently the form preference was for a rather taller cup with a much deeper bowl. However, stemmed bowls of simple form do exist, as well as some of a more elaborate character, but possibly the type was an imported one and found little favour.

China evolved the shallow bowl type in green glazed earthenware, having a trumpet stem without foot, as well as that having a cylindrical stem and bowl foot, as early as the Han period, but so far no example of a knopped stem has come to my notice, and the same form with a cylindrical stem is to be found at a much later date. Curiously enough, two little Kang-hsi stemmed cups recently brought to my attention might have been copied from a Romano-British example, but more probably the inspiration came from a Persian source. It should be made clear that although most of the surviving examples are in pottery or porcelain yet the shapes were just as easily produced in hammered metal, however so far it has not been possible to locate any specimens—logically of course they must have existed, but changing fashions may in some degree account for their scarcity.

What, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter? Frankly, it is very difficult to arrive at any opinion that will stand against all criticism, because it is possible to produce from one source or another a well-authenticated definition of the word "Tazza" which will fit almost any type of vessel. Desirable as it would be to limit the meaning of the word, matters have probably gone too far to render this possible, but if as suggested it be described as a "stemmed drinking vessel having a shallow bowl," this would impose some restriction and perhaps clarify the situation.

If this be accepted, then it would seem that the type was very widely distributed both as regards time and space, and is, moreover, a perfectly logical development of the simple flat bowl used for so many purposes during various epochs by mankind; the stem, added in the first instance merely for ease of handling, has been made a prominent and interesting feature owing to the variety and beauty of its many shapes. J.G.N.C.

SHAFTS FROM APOLLO'S BOW

21. "Words, words, words"

POLONIUS: *What do you read my Lord?*
HAMLET: *Words, words, words.*

MR. BERNARD SHAW in a recent lengthy letter to *The Times* pleaded for the establishment of common meanings to the words wherewith we discuss political facts and theories, pointing out that "democracy," "freedom," "nationalisation" and like terms were now meaning exactly opposite things on either side of that "iron curtain" which is neither iron nor a curtain. His plea for semantics—long since the keystone of an important branch of modern philosophy—might well be extended to our own world of art where "the meaning of meaning" (if any) would help readers even if it hampered the flights of critics.

In a humble campaign of my own in this direction I have occasionally quoted a sentence from an important Sunday paper which, dealing with some artist's work, assures us that:

> "The dematerialisation of forms and diffusion of contours gives to his work a vagueness which is not dispelled by the occasional, usually slight and even hesitant, introduction of graphic coefficients for the purpose of giving an objective explanation of the chromatic factors."

So now you know. Or do you?

If the critic, like Don Adriano de Armado of whom Holofernes complained, "draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument" at least the reader must feel the exaltation of this Henry Jamesian prose, and with a little practice can emulate it impressively.

The re-opening of some of the Turner Rooms at the Tate Gallery has evoked certain essays in this style and reminded us anew of the language and style in which Ruskin put his hero upon the map. Ruskin is, of course, suspect by the bright young cognoscenti of to-day, although the returning fashion for Victorianism may at any moment render him acceptable again. His whole attitude to art, and especially to the art of Turner, is that the painter is to tell the truth about the visual facts of nature. His attitude to literature, that the writer is to state as clearly as possible the matter in his mind.

> "The author has something to say which he perceives to be true and useful or helpfully beautiful. . . He is bound to say it clearly and melodiously if he may: clearly at all events."

One wonders whether he would have hailed either the clarity or the melody of much contemporary art criticism. Even more does one wonder what the doctrinaires of semantics with their passion for exact meaning would make of it.

> "The natural object has been almost completely translated into its plastic symbol, a transition achieved by vision, and which derives its force from its authenticity"

I read in a catalogue Foreword. Which means to say that the picture looks literally like nothing on earth. Not that we are asking for pictures to look like anything anywhere; we have long since passed that stage. Anyway, at the moment we are not concerned with the picture *per se* but with what Oliver Goldsmith would call "Words of learnéd length and thund'ring sound" wherewith the critics hail it.

"Plastic" and "Plasticity" almost lead the field; "Calligraphic" runs them close; "Chromatic" is neck to neck. Ruskin in his Victorian simplicity, and with his almost morbid passion for being understood, would probably have written "Form," "Line," and "Colour." But then Ruskin drew his style from that "well of English undefiled," the Anglo-Saxon of the Authorised Version of the Bible and the Apochrypha. He even drew his ideas from it, and may have remembered on this very subject the terse comment of that Jesus-ben-Sirach who wrote in Ecclesiasticus:

> "A fool travaileth with a word as a woman labours with child."

Perhaps the ultimate wisdom, however, should be neither with the critic nor with the philosopher, but with Turner himself. Long before the days when it could be argued that

> "the intricate reflections of light on the crest of the near waves . . . at first glance seem merely a calligraphic display, a writhing of light strokes insufficiently evocative of the volume of the water Turner wished to define"

some eloquent and erudite gentlemen were engaged in a post-prandial discussion of his art, and as a last resource the artist himself was appealed to. His reply is classic and final. Turner rose portentously.

"Aye, painting's a rum thing," he said; and sat down.

It had better be left at that.

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Sources of Small-sword Ornament—Part II

BY J. F. HAYWARD

THE first of the German engravers to produce designs specifically for small-swords was the Viennese goldsmith, Friedrich Jakob Morisson who, commencing in 1693, published four fine sets of plates of designs for jewellery, metal book mounts, etc. In an undated set published in Augsburg and entitled "Unterschiedliche neue Inventionen von Geschmückh, Zierathen und Galanterien . . . gezeichnet von Fridrich Jakob Morisson," the fifth plate (here illustrated in Fig. I) shows two designs for sword hilts. Of these, the first is richly set with precious stones and is evidently intended to be executed by the jeweller, while the second with its fine arabesque scrollwork is presumably intended for the metal-worker. Hilts set with pastes or jewels appear frequently in the pattern-books but few have survived, except from a later period. The Morisson design treats the grip in a characteristically Baroque manner; it has the spirally twisted form, so familiar in the columns of Baroque altars. The ground between the precious stones is decorated with trophies of arms and delicate floral scrolls, and the whole design shows a feeling for ornament of a higher order than was displayed by any of his numerous school. The second design in Fig. I represents a style which is frequently found on small-swords of the end of the XVIIth and early XVIIIth century. It is composed of strap-work and delicate interlaced scrollwork, and is the earliest version of a manner which will be found later in the works of Heumann, Wuest, Baumgartner, etc. I have not been able to find a hilt of early enough date in this style which could definitely be said to have been derived from Morisson, but the hilts M4-1943 in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and Bashford Dean, Plate XIV, Fig. 19, have russet steel hilts encrusted with delicate scrollwork of this

Fig. I. Design by Friedrich Jakob Morisson in the Baroque manner, depicting on left a hilt set with precious stones, and on right a hilt decorated with interlaced scrollwork. *From the original engraving in the Victoria and Albert Museum*

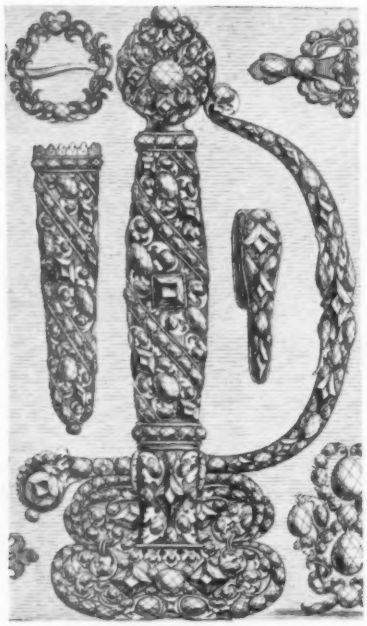

Fig. II. Detail from engraving by David Baumann in the style of F. J. Morisson. *Victoria and Albert Museum*

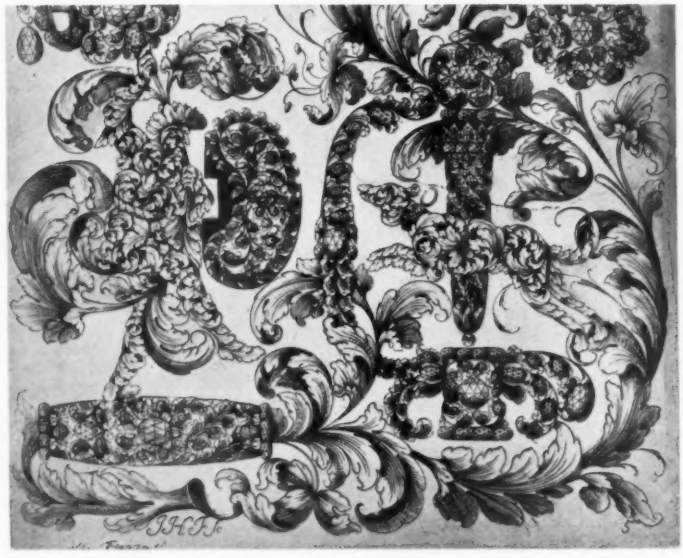

Fig. III. Detail from original engraving by monogrammist "J.H.F." in the Victoria and Albert Museum, showing a fantastic version of F. J. Morisson's design

Fig. IV. Design by Georg Heumann in a style which goes beyond the convention of the jewellers' shop. *From the original engraving in the Victoria and Albert Museum*

Fig. V. Design by Georg Heumann showing compositions of foliage, trophies and Roman heads. *From the original engraving in the Victoria and Albert Museum*

Fig. VI. Hilt of cast, chased and gilt bronze. French, early XVIIIth century, derived from Heumann. *Victoria and Albert Museum*

type in gold. Of these, the former dates from the end of the XVIIth century, the latter from the middle of the XVIIIth century. The second design in Fig. I has an attractive feature in the double trefoil cresting which runs around the edge of the shell and also appears on the other mounts. The early date of this design is recognisable in the flattened and richly-moulded form of the pommel and also in the double quillons without knucklebow, a fashion which one associates with the so-called "pillow swords" of the mid-XVIIth century rather than the small-sword.

Though Morisson's designs are amongst the most successful of the period, he cannot be said to have done more than apply with great skill the ornament which he had worked out for jewellery and snuffboxes to the rather awkwardly shaped elements of the small-sword hilt.

Morisson's pattern-books exerted a powerful influence upon his contemporaries. The earliest of his numerous copyists, all of whom adhered rather timidly to their model, was David Baumann who in 1695 published in Augsburg "Ein neues Buch von Allerhand Gold-Arbeit auff unterschiedliche Art und Manier sehr wol u. nützlich zu gebrauchen." This work came out two years after Morisson's first set of plates upon which it was based. It consisted of 17 plates of which one, numbered 10, shows a jewelled hilt (Fig. II) very closely related to the first Morisson design in Fig. I. In comparing the two, it should be recognised that the apparent coarseness of the Baumann sheets is partly due to the fact that the engraver who executed them

Fig. VII. Hilt of russet steel, encrusted with gold. French or English, early XVIIIth century, derived from Heumann. *Victoria and Albert Museum*

was less skilled than the J. A. Pfeffel who carried out the engraving of the Morisson sheet. Like Morisson, Baumann seems to have remained satisfied with this single modest excursion into the field of sword hilt design. He cannot be said to have added anything to the limited achievement of his master. In this respect he does not differ from most of the other followers of Morisson, who included just one sheet of small-sword hilts amongst their designs for jewellery.

The next member of the Morisson school is J. B. Herbst, a German designer who came to England where he published two sets of jewellers' ornament in 1708 and 1710 respectively, which included small-sword designs. In his designs Herbst makes more use of the strapwork which appears in the second Morisson design but which is usually associated with the later members of the German school.

A third engraver in the style of Morisson is known only by his initials J.H.F. (Nagler. "Die Monogrammisten," 2571). His sword hilt designs, of which a sheet is illustrated in Fig. III, follow closely on Morisson's original but are almost concealed by the peculiar luxuriant foliage which covers the sheet. According to Nagler, twelve sheets by this artist are recorded. The human and animal figures composed of foliage are rather naïve little conceits which recall the grotesques of the early XVIIth century rather than the enlightened XVIIIth century. It is the swirling Baroque plumes of foliage that give this sheet its interest.

The last of the series is the Augsburg master, Paul Schmittmeyer, who like Morisson was appointed goldsmith to the Imperial Court in Vienna. Only one plate, numbered 8, of Schmittmeyer's work is preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum. It belongs to a series published by I. Wolff of Augsburg, who issued many of the German pattern-books of the first half of the XVIIIth century. This particular sheet does not merit further treatment, for, while it repeats the familiar designs of Morisson, it does so with little imagination.

Though Morisson designed a hilt decorated with interlacing arabesques, the heavier strapwork which forms the basis of so much small-sword ornament was actually exploited in Germany by the Nürnberg goldsmith, Johann Leonhard Eysler. This master, who died in 1733, was a contemporary of Morisson; he derived his style, not from Morisson, but direct from Jean Berain. His first dated series of engraved ornament was published in 1697. He issued a large number of sets of designs all based on strapwork into which graceful and finely-composed acanthus foliage was interwoven. Amongst his followers, the most significant from our point of view were Georg Heumann of Nürnberg and Johann Jakob Baumgartner and Johann Leonhard Wuest of Augsburg.

Georg Heumann (1691-1759) is described on the title page of the second of the two sets of sheets of sword hilt ornament that he published as "Messerschmidt in Nürnberg." From the first set, entitled "Neu inventirte Degengefass," published by J. C. Weigel, the plate numbered 2 and, from the second set, the plate numbered 4 are illustrated in Figs. IV and V respectively. These two series of seven and six plates, respectively, show much greater variety of subject than can be found in Morisson and his school; they must have had an influence on current production, since many hilts of the period survive with ornament corresponding closely to Heumann's designs.

The Heumann plates include trophies of arms (Figs. IV and V), Roman medallion heads (Fig. V), acanthus foliage (Fig. V), scenes of the chase, strapwork, etc. They are unfortunately undated, but their style is that of the first three decades of the XVIIIth century. At no point does any suggestion of rococo enter into Heumann's work, indeed the pommels in the form of lions' heads which he employs for hunting sword hilts have an almost XVIIth century character.

Even on the basis of the limited number of examples in the Victoria and Albert Museum and those illustrated in the Bashford Dean Catalogue, it is possible to make quite a number of identifications. Though in no case is the design exactly reproduced, the following hilts appear to be traceable to Heumann:

Victoria and Albert Museum, 1715-1855 (Fig. VI), the pommel and shell of this French hilt in cast, chased and gilt brass from Plate IV, second series (Fig. V). 1714-1888 (Fig. VII), the pommel and shell of this hilt in russet steel encrusted with gold from Plate VI, second series. 1722-1888, the pommel and shell of this hilt in steel, chiselled and gilt from Plate IV, first series.

Bashford Dean, European Court Swords and Hunting Swords. Nos. 24 and 25, Plates 18 and 19, two Italian (?) hilts of chiselled steel from Plate IV of the second series (Fig. V). No. 18, Plate 13, hilt of russet steel encrusted with gold, described by Dean as Dutch or English but, in my opinion, more probably French, from Plate III, first series. No. 22, Plate 16, hilt of chiselled steel, Italian, from the design for a hunting sword on Plate VI, second series.

There is no difference in style between the Heumann series, which were evidently published within a short time of each other. Their author had a fairly good idea of the possibilities of small-sword ornament, since, unlike his predecessors who mostly turned out designs for jewelled hilts, he produced designs appropriate for all the various methods of decorating small-swords; steel chiselling, chasing, damascening and encrusting with gold or silver. An indication of the rising interest in Oriental weapons which manifested itself during the XVIIIth century appears in Plate VII, which consists of engravings of a Persian sabre hilt. There are, or were until recently, a number of these European-made sabres of Oriental design, dating from the early XVIIIth century, in the Dresden Armoury.

Heumann was, unlike the other masters of ornament discussed in this article, a Messerschmied (blade and sword-hilt maker) by profession, and it is to this circumstance that one can doubtless attribute the success and also the appropriateness of his designs which, while exploiting all the possible methods of small-sword ornament, do not neglect the practical problems of execution.

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PORTRAITS IN THE LANDSCAPE PARK

An Exhibition at Norwich Castle Museum

THERE is a kind of heartening realism in the recognition of the fact that much of the greatness of that splendid period of English art, the XVIIIth century, is owed to the introduction of turnip growing and other revolutionary methods of Dutch agriculture by men like Coke of Norfolk. East Anglia grew rich under the new ways; and there arose a gracious country life centred on beautiful houses set in the midst of spacious parks which were themselves set amid the wealthy farm lands.

It is particularly suitable, therefore, that the Norwich Castle Museum, guardian of the wholly English art of this whole district, should stage an Exhibition with the alluring title "Portraits in the Landscape Park." It is even more suitable that one of the most resplendent works there should be Gainsborough's "Coke of Norfolk" from the Earl of Leicester's family pictures at Holkham. It is said to be the last portrait painted by Gainsborough.

Another picture which connects this art with that story of the prosperity of our agriculture is Kneller's dual portrait of "Horatio and Charles Townshend," the sons of the first Viscount, for it was Charles himself who, when he inherited the title and the lovely lands of Raynham, introduced the turnip cultivation.

Gainsborough, however, in spirit and in truth dominates the Exhibition. He has five fine works belonging mostly to that period of his life in these parts before fame had made him an exile into the urbanities of Bath and London.

Reynolds and Romney, Hogarth and Lely, Hoppner and Zoffany and Opie and Lawrence: all the great names are here, with a number of surprising, delightful works by lesser known men. There are even pictures with no name attached to them but with a quality and charm which should set the attribution scouts on the trail. Such is the one of a little George Stone of Bedingham Hall sitting rapturously blowing bubbles.

Most of this is rightly rural, with that sense of opulence which distinguishes it from being rustic, for these country aristocrats loved fine clothes as well as fine houses. A fascinating sidelight is thrown upon the period and the subject by the inclusion of two of Humphrey Repton's famous *Red Books*, those albums wherein the great landscape gardener and follower of "Capability" Brown outlined for his clients his schemes for creating these parks and imposing his skilful art upon the nature of the surrounding landscape.

It is part of the delight of this Exhibition that it has been staged with a grace and spaciousness which belongs to its subject. Lovely pieces of furniture have been loaned from the great houses so that these pictures may be seen in their typical setting not as works in a public gallery but as family treasures in the home. One other touch which gives this Exhibition a character of its own: the catalogue includes an acknowledgment to a group of ladies who have organised themselves to keep the gallery gay with flowers. Other museums and organisers *please* copy.

HORACE SHIPP

Examples of Modern Art in Glass

BY E. M. ELVILLE

AN enlightened modernist might describe the artistic decline of XIXth century glassmaking as a hangover following a riotous Victorian orgy; he would trace it to the development of productive and decorative facilities which occurred after 1825; he would explain it as due to the vulgarity and liberty which always attend any improvement in the technique of subduing matter to spirit except in the aesthetically-minded.

As the efforts of the English cutter had been more offensive to the artistic taste than those of his foreign competitors, the effect was naturally more keenly felt in this country than in any other, but there is no doubt that the reaction to the wildly over-emphasised styles of mid-Victorian glass was world-wide.

In this country, glassmakers had snatched supremacy from their Bohemian competitors in the latter part of the XVIIIth century when Ravenscoft's glass-of-lead had been found so receptive to incised cutting. The fashion was enjoyed for nearly a century and can be said to have ended with the Anglo-Irish period.

The fall of cut-glass into disfavour which followed can be traced to several causes. First there was the repeal in 1845 of the Glass Excise Act which for a full century had heavily taxed the manufacture of glass, hampering development but preventing over-elaboration. The glassmaker reacted at once to his new freedom and created shapeless masses of crystal glass which he cut deeply and profusely to make a dazzling prismatic display with no better object than to increase his profits. Then the industrial revolution, which mechanised art into industry, subjugated individuality, and finally came the debasement of cut-glass caused by cheap pressed and blown imitations of it made on machines conceived in the American mind.

In Germany, the reactionary movement against the popularity of cut-glass during the *Biedermeier* period was to introduce counter attractions equally as offensive as over-emphasised cutting to the aesthetic taste; vessels vividly coloured in every conceivable manner made their appearance from 1820 onwards. They lacked form and appeal and were in typically heavy and unimpressive styles without originality.

In France, the reaction was somewhat different. The condemnation of the over-emphasised styles was marked by the inspired creations of Emile Gallé at Nancy. His style was something entirely new and established what has become almost a renaissance in the art of glass. He obtained ingenious colouring and original contrasts in combinations of opaque and transparent glass and exploited with great success the technique of delicately-tinted cased glass from which the upper surface was removed by wheel or acid to disclose some simple floral *motif* in relief embodying a vivid naturalism. Such work has an ancient example, unsurpassed in beauty and workmanship, in the Portland Vase of Roman times.

Gallé's own poetical descriptions of his work were as inspired as his art. An obscured effect forming indefinite cloudings he would describe as "trails of mist which have risen late" and the tinted vase carved in cameo-relief shown in Fig. I, which is a signed specimen, would be "of a sorrowful rose colour."

Emile Gallé died when only fifty-eight in 1904, but he had established a new conception of design in glass which had followers in every country. Schools after the Gallé tradition were set up in France, England, Sweden, America and Germany; it is with particular reference to the latter that this article has been written.

German engravers had at various times favoured the more difficult type of work in cameo-relief (*Hochschnitt*) in which the design is raised from the glass by the background being cut away.

Fig. I. GLASS VASE carved in cameo-relief style by Emile Gallé

Fig. II. GLASS FLASK carved in *Hochschnitt* style by Wilhelm von Eiff

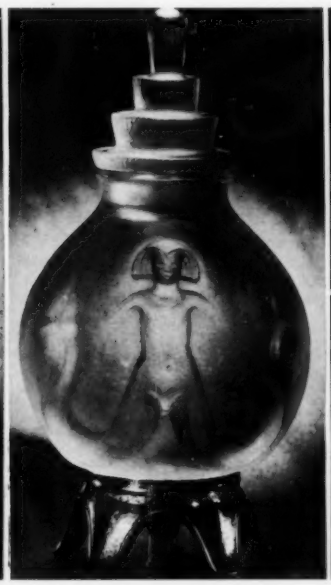

Fig. III. STOPPERED FLASK in glass engraved by von Eiff with abstract *motif* in unpolished cameo-relief

Fig. IV. GLASS BEAKER engraved by von Eiff in shallow intaglio, the style usually adopted by engravers

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This style, as already mentioned, was employed in the most notable of all examples of Roman art in glass, the Portland Vase, which in 1786 gave the inspiration to Josiah Wedgwood for his famous Jaspar ware. This same style was revived by Friedrich Winter at the end of the XVIIth century at Petersdorf in Silesia, and his sculptured goblets are classics of their kind. His nephew, Martin Winter, and a pupil, Gottfried Spiller, carried on the tradition in the *Hochschnitt* style and some notable works from this school are preserved in a number of museums. Franz Gondelach was another German engraver of the same period who favoured the technique of cameo-relief, and although he formed no school his work is considered as ranking among the highest achievements in the art of glass.

The modern conception of the ancient technique was revived at Stuttgart in 1921 where a school was formed under the direction of Wilhelm von Eiff, who sought to combine the physical properties inherent in the material with the aesthetic requirements of the article. Wilhelm von Eiff was born in 1890 and learnt glass-engraving when only fifteen. He furthered his studies of the art in Paris under a master who not only taught him the finest details of engraving glass but also of crystal and precious stones. During the first World War, von Eiff engraved portraits in rock crystal of Count Zeppelin and of King Wilhelm II of Wuerttenberg. It was mainly due to Professor Pazaurek that his great talent became known and in 1921 he was made a Professor of the department dealing with glass decoration in the Art College at Stuttgart, probably at that time the most important of its kind in Central Europe.

Special features of von Eiff's work were engraving in cameo-relief or *Hochschnitt* style on massive glass objects sometimes left unpolished to give an attractive clouded finish. Artistic work of great merit in silver in the form of cups, cabinets and settings for jewels also came within his scope, delicate *motifs* being carved on the lapidary's wheel. Rock crystal, semi-precious stones and glass were treated in the same manner, some of the glass specimens being shown in Figs. II, III and IV; they show great craftsmanship and originality.

The specimen in Fig. IV is, however, a different style of workmanship from that usually employed by von Eiff. It is in shallow intaglio, or *Tiefschnitt*, in which the engraving is sunk into the glass surface. This form of engraving is a much easier technique than cameo-relief work and is the style usually adopted by engravers on glass. The influence of the Gallé tradition, however, is noticeable in the specimen shown in Fig. II; it is of the same rough carved effect as the Gallé vase in Fig. I. In both specimens the design has the appearance of having been hewn from the solid with some crude implement with no attempt by the artist to secure the smooth finish typical of most engraved work.

Perhaps the greatest and most original work of von Eiff was the decoration on large sheets of plate glass either tinted throughout or flashed, engraved in religious and mythological subjects. Whatever school a painter may follow, so long as he paints on a flat surface the idea of depth must necessarily be conveyed by artifice. When thick sheets of glass are carved in raised design, the perspective of a subject is real and the transparency and refractive properties of the glass give it an animation and vitality impossible with any other medium.

Even when stains or enamels are fired into the surface of the glass it still lacks the life given it by the play of light when carved, however slight, in natural relief. The myriad multi-coloured fragments which go to make up a stained glass window fall into the same category as painted canvas or enamelled glass. Mosaic windows were invented in the past for two reasons, because large sheets of glass were impossible to make, and if they had been available it would have been technically impossible to engrave them.

Windows and panels, as an alternative to leaded glass built up from small units, are to-day provided in a single piece based on the use of cased multi-layered and coloured sheet. Wilhelm von Eiff chose such sheets as his medium and in decorating them the artist showed both originality of technique and a determination to express himself freely in it. He maintained that although the finest art flourishes only where the technical limitations are the greatest, it is only when an artist can express himself freely that he begins to reveal his true character.

Wilhelm von Eiff's greatest problem was, of course, time. His chosen technique, *Hochschnitt*, he considered the only natural way of applying decoration to glass windows and panels; in no other manner could the requisite degree of character, gaiety and individuality be conveyed. He must quickly have realised, however, the very serious technical limitations of his art. He learnt, no doubt, of Wedgwood's remarks that half the life of an engraver would be devoted for a single work such as the Portland Vase; of Friedrich Winter's engraving tool driven by power from the water-mill at Petersdorf in 1690 in a valiant effort to reduce the arduous task of removing the background before the actual sculpturing of the subject was commenced, work which had previously been done entirely by hand.

Fig. V. An artist at work on a glass panel employing the portable electric engraving tool

Fig. VI. An orange-coloured sheet of plate, 20 sq. ft. in area, engraved by von Eiff

Decorative windows many times larger than the Portland Vase were chosen by von Eiff. They would have been impossible to decorate by hand at the ordinary engraver's bench and if this had been possible no single artist could have completed the work in his lifetime. The problem, however, was solved very simply. It was due to von Eiff's initiative that the greater part of the laborious task of sculpturing such a hard material as glass was executed by mechanical engraving tools, applied like a dentist's drill.

The tool was essentially a portable electric hand-drill provided with an assortment of grinding wheels, boring tools and polishing discs from $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter. The spindle speed was exceedingly high—up to 40,000 r.p.m.—and was capable of perforating a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch sheet of plate glass in 25 seconds. This tool was developed by Bosch at Stuttgart and successfully overcame the time factor, relieving the glass engraver of the laborious work which had so restricted his output in the past.

The use of the tool is shown in Fig. V, which illustrates an engraver at work on a panel impossible to manipulate against the ordinary lapidary wheel rotated in the engraver's lathe. Precision and delicacy beyond the scope of the hand engraver is made possible and time has been so successfully annihilated that carving in cameo-relief on glass is to-day a commercial proposition and not merely an artistic rarity.

One of a series of five windows engraved by von Eiff is shown in Fig. VI; each window measures 8 ft. by 2 ft. 6 ins. and is in orange-coloured plate glass.

Much of the credit for stimulating work of this nature was due to the initiative of von Eiff and schools for its application have been set up in many centres. He died at the early age of fifty-three in 1943. He attained great fame not only as an artist but for having overcome the many technical difficulties of what is perhaps the rarest and most expressive of all applied arts.

JOHN CROME (Old Crome)

1769-1821. His Paintings and Posterity

BY D. M. K. MARENDAZ

AS the doyen of the small group of painters known to us as the Norwich School, John Crome must be accorded a large measure of renown. As the tutor and mentor of many comprising that school, he commands more fame. Yet, ultimately and inevitably in time, his standing will rise or fall on posterity's assessment of his ability as an artist—a judgment cold and dispassionate.

These two periods of fame can and do interchange in their scintillation and dimness; many a master of the XVth, XVIth and XVIIth centuries held in the very highest esteem in his own and next succeeding generations, arouses little enough attention in the auction galleries of to-day.

Overdue is the time calmly to review John Crome's position; for, frankly, the over-praising and laudatory comparison by some of his biographers with such names as Hobbema, Ruisdael and Velasquez cannot find substantiation in the paintings to be found in our galleries and museums.

Sentiment can very easily run away with fact, especially where the subject begins life in a small public-house of a provincial town, followed by such occupations as a youthful "bullock walloper," apothecary's errand boy and coach painter successively, to a pinnacle —high indeed for XVIIIth century England—as drawing master and friend to the local Banking family. Unfortunately nothing spoils a case more efficaciously than exaggeration and it is only because John Crome is a great artist in his own right that his name will live —despite puerile attempts to prove his mantle was descended from such masters of the past.

Having swept away such fantasies let us briefly marshal the facts—in passing taking note of one of fate's ironies, namely, that whereas Francis Barlow writes of himself as "no etcher but a well wisher to painting," until recently his fame posthumously rested on his etchings: on the other hand Crome, whose etchings have quite rightly been put by able judges on the very highest possible standard, is judged only on his paintings! It is of course with these we are here concerned but we are not unmindful of earlier masters' etchings when we consider his paintings and Crome can bear comparison with the greatest of these in his drawings, so they are at least entitled to background consideration. Day in, day out, it was Crome's occupation to draw and teach people how to draw; by it he earned his daily bread. There can be no doubt—even if the etchings and engravings left to us did not prove it—that he was a master *par excellence* at drawing—the Gurneys, whose business partner was Dawson Turner, a connoisseur in whose collection were etchings by Raffaele from Sir Thomas Lawrence's collection, had the money to command the best in the land and there is no doubt Crome was that. The hitherto unpublished etching (Fig. II) is his only attempt, so far known, of a carrier's cart. Where can posterity look for a more faithful and honest representation of a team of horses? It is taken from the back of "The Cottage in a Wood." Crome did the engraving and then put the copper plate aside, later to pick it up and use the other side for the painting—unique for him and a rare proceeding anyway.

Fig. I. COTTAGE IN A WOOD. *Collections Sir John Boileau and Captain D. M. K. Marendaz.* Exhibited British Council, London, 1948

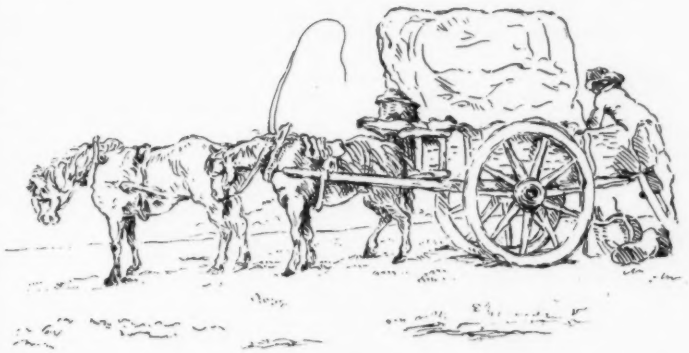

Fig. II. THE CARRIER'S CART. Engraving by Crome on the back of painting in Fig. I

Fig. III. BOULEVARD DES ITALIENS. *Collection Quinton Gurney.* Exhibited British Council, Paris, 1948

When we come to assess his paintings, there, reasonably enough, we find his efforts spring from and return to, often, the technique of the drawing master—studies of this and that—"The Poringland Oak," the "Winfarthing Oak," even the "Slate Quarry" and the National Gallery's "Mousehold Heath" must be placed in this category.

No master with any claim to greatness could rest it on these—any painting with such pretension of necessity must have ageless interest and a good composition as well as providing what pictures are intended to do primarily, namely, be an enrichment and an ornament to our habitation.

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Fig. IV. WINDSOR CASTLE. *Collection D. M. K. Marendaz.* Exhibited British Council, 1948

All too few of his known works can honestly be regarded as complying with these conditions.

But from the aforementioned studies we can trace the progress of his painting through "The Cottage in a Wood" (Fig. I) contemporary with which is the slightly more ambitious "On the Wensum" in the Norwich Museum. In both we find two characteristic features; one, the unmistakable influence of his coach-painting days—the "oily" and "fatty" appearance of the paint (almost varnish), especially the trees; they have had many coats. Secondly, Norfolk's predominating building material of the time has become almost his signature—the clay lump houses and cottages: so much so that even his "Windsor Castle" (Fig. IV) and the houses of "Boulevard Des Italiens" (Fig III) appear to be Norfolk clay lump! A further trait from his coach-painting days is to be found in the complete absence of any brush mark in his finished work. Fig. V shows his technique in building up leaves photographed from "Cottage in a Wood" and although a great gap in years and outlook separates this painting from that of "Windsor Castle" the technique remains precisely the same.

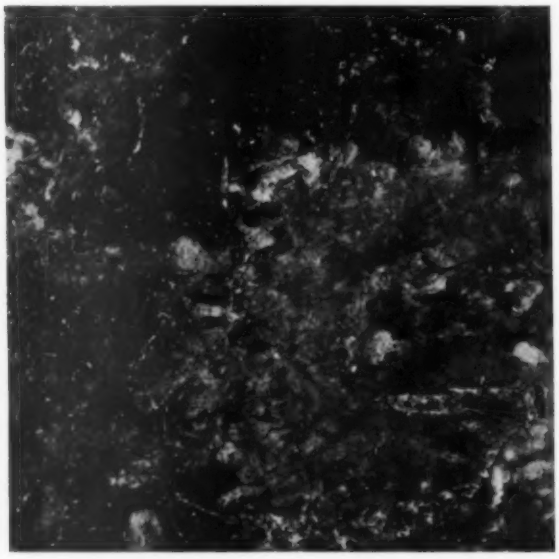

Fig. V. DETAIL from Fig. I showing absence of brush marks

Now nine years before the end of his life a tremendous influence enters in—he pays a visit to the Continent. His letters to James Stark and his wife indicate the deep impression and enlightenment which this experience brings to him. The importance of "interest" and composition suddenly seems to have dawned on him, whilst he takes so much care with his figures that little legitimate criticism could fairly be levelled against them in "Boulevard Des Italiens" commenced in 1812 and not finished until 1819 although exhibited in both years, or those in "Windsor Castle" signed and dated 1819 which followed.

On these two paintings we can, with his drawings, safely permit his reputation to rest, in the knowledge that time will not tarnish it or take away—notwithstanding unenlightened carping at them for not being dark or empty studies with so little individualism that they can be related at will to Velasquez, Ruisdael or Hobbema! They represent John Crome's most mature compositional advancement, entirely and only Crome's.

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MEISSEN FIGURE

A.S. (Birmingham). Your figure marked with the cross-swords in underglaze blue is Meissen. The device of the cross-swords was adopted from the arms of the Elector of Saxony about 1724, and has been used in many forms and with varying accompaniments, to the present day. Accordingly, though it can be observed that the earliest versions of the mark generally show the swords crossed at a right angle and the recent ones at a less, it is impossible from the swords alone to determine the age of a piece. When a dot is placed between the sword-hilts the period 1763-74 is indicated, and if a star is used in a similar position the Marcolini (1774-1814) interval is implied, though both dots and stars are known to have been used on very early blue and white.

The incised numbers on your figure represent mould-numerals, and they are almost general on XIXth century and later Meissen work. These marks are of little significance to a collector, and seem to be but factory-reference numbers to the particular body used, and to the pattern, or style. A detailed description, a sketch, or better still a photograph would help us to be more exact in dating. The second half of the XIXth century brought a spate of copies of the fine early Meissen models, and their light blues, pinks, and greens, together with their inferior workmanship, betray, or should betray, them. Between the Great Wars, Meissen turned out large numbers of figures and groups, many of them original but most of them strongly reminiscent, in spite of their modern air, of the XVIIIth century work.

It will interest you to know that the Meissen factory is still in production and that the Saxon State Government, at any rate till quite recently, has retained its ownership, though, being in the Russian Zone, its output is almost certainly directed Moscow-wards. Nearby Dresden is an appalling ruin but during the war Meissen ceased not to turn out the porcelain figures that have been the delight of many generations in both hemispheres.

WINTER AND SUMMER FIGURES AND AN UNUSUAL PLATE

L.H. (Perranporth). I do not think your figures, Winter and Summer, can be salt-glaze. The well-known model of a skating boy is much later than the salt-glaze figures, those crude models of Turks, cats, etc., and the rare Pew Groups. From your description your figures appear to me to be rather like the uncoloured cream ware models by Ralph Wood, Junior. I would suggest you send one for identification to the Victoria and Albert Museum, enclosing cost of return postage and registration. Herculaneum porcelain is seldom marked, so I judge your plate to be pottery. It sounds an unusual specimen, but we do know that the factory experimented with many types of ware. Their pottery is frequently marked; the name "Herculaneum" or the impressed Liver bird are the most usual.

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PRE-WAR BACK NUMBERS OF "APOLLO"

Twelve copies picked at random for £2 2s., or selected copies from 4/6 upwards according to the scarcity. APOLLO, 10 Vigo Street, Regent Street, London, W.1.

The French Taste in England

BY JOHN ELTON

THE "French taste," dating from the mid-XVIIIth century, has been described as "rococo," a ridiculous and slang term newly imported about 1836. It was used in disparagement of anything freakish and

Fig. I. Marble-topped mahogany side-table showing rococo and early Georgian elements

Fig. II (*left*). Mirror in carved and gilt wood, *circa* 1750, one of a pair

old fashioned, as it appeared to the eighteen-thirties! The rococo was the work of France, the arbiter of fashion in Europe since the close of the XVIIth century; and while the French *rocaille* had and has its admirers, the English version of that "distemper" did not meet with approval of classically-trained architects and art historians; indeed it was denounced as "degraded." Even as late as 1924 a reviewer wrote that the English were unwise to become involved in the scrolls and wreaths of the rococo, because it was "a scheme of things not suited to the English temperament." Some of this detraction was derived from acute national rivalry; and there is a note of prejudice in the references of a Georgian architect, Isaac Ware, in 1756, to the "unmeaning ornament" of this style, and the French "crocked figures."

In the hands of both French and English creators of this style, the dominant lines of carvers' pieces, such as mirror frames, console-tables and *torchères* were expressed by a system of associated curves. In pieces where a rectangular structural basis was demanded, the rococo took the form, generally, of surface ornament. The English version of the style which is a lively adaptation of the *rocaille* seems to have come into being somewhat suddenly, about 1738. The designs of a carver and designer, Matthias Lock, dating from about 1740-1765, are of high quality, and would have been acceptable in contemporary France for their lightness, liveliness and elegance. The *motifs* introduced were naturally of French derivation, such as rockwork, the pierced shell and the cabochon; and these were combined with pliant tree and plant forms and flowers. In early stages, as in the mahogany chair in the Lady Lever Art Gallery (formerly the property of the Fruiterers Company of London), the rococo details are blended with earlier Georgian elements, such as the satyr mask carved on the seat rail and cabriole legs. In the marble-topped side-table (Fig. I) the Georgian structure, and the leaf-carving of the frieze is in contrast with the pierced carving of the apron, and with the enriched cabochon on the knees.

In contrast with mobile and usable furniture, the frames of mirrors and console-tables, which had a wall backing to support them, show rococo fantasy *in excelsis*. In these carvers' pieces, there is usually discursive composition and extravagant scroll-work. The eye is led to travel through the intricacies of richly ornamented broken curved movements. In these, and in the light, springing plant forms, there is a look of growth and vitality. In addition to these *motifs* stylised birds were often added to the composition, often the eagle displayed, and the Chinese crested and long-tailed bird, which seems to balance the frame of the gilt mirror (Fig. II) which is one of a pair, grouped on either side of some object of importance, such as a chimneypiece. The carved and gilt mirror (Fig. III) while exploiting in its frame the system of short scrolls, is symmetrical in design. The useful extended shellwork is grooved; and the remaining detail consists of foliage and flowers. In the chair back (Fig. IV) the uprights are carved with foliate stems, and the top rail, composed of sharply carved detail, centres in a small pavilion pierced with two quatrefoils. The unusual relief of the carving on the back shows a disregard of comfort, where a decorative pretext could be advanced. The well-known pattern books of the middle Georgian period, by Lock, Johnison, Ince and Mayhew and the two Halfpennys, include a large element of the French taste, applied not only to carvers' pieces but case-furniture and chairs, and having captions indicating their French derivation, but by 1770 the style had fallen into disfavour not only with the *dilettanti*, but with the general public.

Fig. III. Carved and gilt mirror, mid XVIIIth century

Fig. IV. Back of a mahogany chair, mid XVIIIth century

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Furniture of the Early XIXth Century

BY JOHN ELTON

THE interest of furniture of the early XIXth century lies in the challenge it presents to the judgment in choosing pieces of good design from an age when, from the death of William IV, the level is low. Both in the Regency and in the reigns of George IV and William IV, pieces were produced that are found universally serviceable to-day, such as small tables, "what-nots," dwarf bookcases and what that age termed "moving libraries," book-stands on castors, and canterburies. The dumb waiter, defined in 1803 as "an useful piece of furniture to serve in some respects the place of a waiter," was a legacy from the Georgian period; in drawing rooms, the "what-not," defined as an "open stand with shelves one above another for keeping or displaying various objects," with stands for music, became recognised as necessary accessories in furnishing and are worth consideration. The style was a federation of styles, and the increase in heaviness and decline in taste were progressive; the middle years of the century, recorded in the catalogue of the "Great" Exhibition of 1851, have had a bad reception among the historians of art, one of whom described the spirit of the age as "a kind of bastard baroque, passing at times into a flimsy caricature of rococo." Rosewood, a timber of a rich brown colour, with beautiful streaks and cloud-like markings of a still darker tint, which was imported from Brazil, was the most distinctive of the furniture woods (for "dressed" apartments) during the Regency and the early Victorian periods. It was held "in the highest esteem as a fancy wood" in 1846, and appeared at its best in large areas, such as table-tops, and doors of cabinets. So great was its vogue during this long period that "furniture, even of a superior kind, made of mahogany, was stained a rosewood colour." The figure and colour of rosewood was so attractive that no carving was required; but a form of inlay, of stringing lines and cast brass ornament, was employed. This inlay was cut out of sheet brass, and inserted into the veneer of rosewood or mahogany with remarkable exactness. A more intricate design of foliated scrolls took the place of this early restrained brass work about the period of Waterloo. Brass inlay in seat furniture, the sofa and couch, in a variety of forms, and a plentiful supply of footstools contributed to comfort. The early stages of the XIXth century (covering a period between 1795 and 1820) have been fully studied and illustrated and two recent exhibitions at the Brighton Pavilion have called attention to the fine quality and classical grace of the first phase of the Regency taste. Inlay in brass is the only decoration of the rosewood dining

Fig. I (*left*). CANTERBURY, *circa* 1810

Fig. II (*right*). WORKTABLE decorated with mother of pearl

Fig. III. ROSEWOOD CHAIR inlaid with brass—from the Victoria & Albert Museum

chair (Fig. III) which dates from about 1820. An advantage in the use of this inlay on seat furniture was the smooth surface presented, "without any raised ornaments." Brass inlay was also used in conjunction with a ground of lighter wood such as maple, or amboyna, but more commonly inlay of ebony or ebonised wood was employed. It was considered the duty of the cabinet-maker "to harmonize metals with woods" so as not to overload these articles. The period was one of rapid fluctuations in taste, and in 1819 we note that many pieces of furniture were "daily falling into disuse, while others are introduced which, for a time, are considered indispensably necessary for our comfort." There was a wide range, not only in the forms but the decoration of furniture.

Decorated papier-mâché provided a base for lively decorations both in japanning and mother of pearl. The early use of papier-mâché was in boards or sheets of paper pasted together in a flat form, which served to make teatrays and panels for furniture, doors, coaches and screens. In the second decade of the XIXth century, a patent was taken out by a Birmingham firm for "working pearl shell into various forms and for applying it to ornamental uses in the manufacture of paper and other wares." The same firm in 1825 invented a process for softening "paper" boards by steam and shaping them in moulds, which enabled them to produce a large variety of furniture, which was painted with scenery and figure subjects and also decorated with thin pieces of mother-of-pearl shell. A visitor to England in 1844 observed papier-mâché "fashioned in huge masses, tables, sofas, presses and almost every ornamental article," which were said to have many advantages over the same article made of wood. The work table shows the effectiveness of this form of decoration with light garlands and sprays of flowers in iridescent mother-of-pearl relieved against a glossy black ground, to which the sections were attached by cement varnish (Fig. II). The projections and the thin pearl shell was slight, but the numerous coats of transparent varnish brought the ground of applied shell to the same level.

In contrast with dark rosewood, mahogany, and papier-mâché with a black ground, the carpets and needlework coverings of seat funiture were brilliant in colour. Charlotte Brontë describes in *Jane Eyre* a drawing room and boudoir "spread with white carpets, on which were laid brilliant garlands of flowers," on which "glowed in rich contrast coloured couches and ottomans."

BOOK REVIEWS

FAKES. Otto Kurz. (328 pp. + 95 pl.) Faber. 30s.

MANY people must have thought about writing a book on fakes and have been deterred by the attendant difficulties. The literature of art-forgeries is quite considerable but it is scattered over periodicals and newspapers in every tongue and it is irritatingly inconclusive. Nearly every forgery which is denounced, finds a defender, so that in the end the reader is left to reach his own conclusions with the aid of illustrations which often leave much to be desired. It is only very occasionally that a forger like I. F. Joni, who added so many to the catalogue of Italian primitives, takes the world into his confidence by publishing an autobiography. Occasionally legal proceedings bring a forger into the limelight, but many just sink into obscurity after museum officials and art-dealers have learnt to recognize their artistic individuality. Much interesting history is lost in this way. The generation of collectors and museum officials who were victimised by L. Marcy is gone and we shall never now know the personality or the *modus operandi* of this versatile artist whose superb pastiches of Gothic ivories, goldsmiths' work and ironwork wormed their ways into all the principal museums of Europe in the nineties. He never admitted his authorship and fear of legal proceedings and other motives deterred writers from touching on his works during his very long lifetime. It was only in 1922 that the late Dr. O. von Falke published an article on his work in the first part of the short-lived *Belvedere*. It was not very comprehensive and, appearing where it did, it escaped the attention of many readers, so that a notorious work of Marcy has been acclaimed as a masterpiece in a reputable London art magazine as late as 1945!

Dr. Kurz has had a huge field to cover as he deals with both the graphic and the applied arts, European and Oriental, each art being treated separately. In Europe faking has a continuous history since the Renaissance, though the classes of objects forged have altered in accordance with artistic fashions. It would be unfair, therefore, to complain that certain groups of fakes have been passed over or that he has not told us as much about certain others as might have been expected. In one or two instances we feel that he has cast his net a little too wide. The obliteration of the mother from the painting by Reynolds of Mrs. Payne and her daughters (Pls. 2 & 3) has nothing fraudulent about it but was merely an error of taste, a worse example, since it destroyed for all time a modest work of art, being the conversion in Victorian times of a Georgian tankard into a spouted hot-water jug (a serious offence against the hall-marking laws), at the same time embossing it with rococo scrolls and flowers (Pl. 77).

The extent of Dr. Kurz's field has not operated entirely to his disadvantage since it has enabled him to restrict himself to instances on which he is prepared to give a considered opinion. In only a few cases will the reader feel inclined to question his decisions.

Though planned to be comprehensive, we note three omissions. It would have been easy to add a section on the forging of Nielli in Venice in the early XIXth century since all the necessary references are in A. M. Hind's *Nielli in the British Museum* (1936). The forging of ancient coins has been going on continuously since the Renaissance and cannot be logically omitted when medals are included. Though obscurity surrounds most coin-forgers Sir George Hill was able to write quite an entertaining book on *Becker the Counterfeiter* (1924). An interesting chapter could also have been written on the forging of arms and armour.

Dr. Kurz is to be congratulated on a well-written, well-arranged and authoritative book. It is to be hoped that the ready welcome which is likely to be accorded it will encourage the publishers to allow the addition of more illustrations, so that pictures of fakes can be contrasted with originals whenever known. An illustration of some typical *Billies and Charleys* is urgently needed. The species is now well known in this country but examples are to be found in many Continental museums and two featured in an exhibition of Byzantine art in the United States last year. C.C.O.

ART IN SCOTLAND. Ian Finlay. (180 pp. + 17 pl.) Oxford University Press. 15s.

This is a stimulating attempt to trace the tortuous course of Scottish art from the earliest times to the present day. It is, of course, inevitable that half the space should be allotted to the period after 1800, since a vigorous art requires sound national finances which Scotland never enjoyed until the XIXth century.

Previously Scotland had been a poor country situated on the edge of Europe, and we feel that Mr. Finlay would have done better in dealing with the earlier centuries if he had compared more often the art of Scotland with those of other countries similarly situated, rather than with the great fountain heads of fashion in France, Italy and Germany. If the Scottish cathedrals had remained intact it would be found that they would bear comparison with the cathedrals of Scandinavia. Until the Reformation the Scandinavian kingdoms likewise satisfied their requirements in paintings and furnishings by imports from the fashionable centres in the Low Countries and North Germany. On the other hand Mr. Finlay has given a very well-balanced account of the effects of the Reformation on the arts in Scotland, showing that though much needless damage was done to ancient buildings, it was a period when the minor arts took on a new life. The great age of the Scottish goldsmiths was the stormy hundred years which ushered in Protestantism. The immediate effect of the Union was to open greater opportunities for Scottish talent but almost entirely outside Scotland. By 1800, however, Scotland had so far set her house in order by improved agriculture and increasing manufactures that there became greater scope at home for the cultivation of the arts.

The brighter side of the history of later Scottish art has been her wealth of painters. The talent for architecture evinced in the XVIIIth century did not survive. The XIXth century began auspiciously with Raeburn and Geddes besides a band of landscape painters who exploited the new cult of the Romantic. The middle of the century was disappointing; those in Scotland into whose hands great wealth had fallen, had little artistic discrimination. By the close of the century the position had improved and Glasgow was able to produce and maintain a school of able painters in touch with the latest developments abroad. The picture given of the present situation is less sure. A wide interest in painting exists but there is no sign that the Scottish architectural talent is reviving, nor that a genius for sculpture is being developed. C.C.O.

JAN VERMEER VAN DELFT. By A. B. de Vries. (B. T. Batsford.) 42s. net.

Much study has been directed towards the discovery of additions to the canon of authentic works by Jan Vermeer of Delft in recent years. A revised edition of Philip Hall's *Jan Vermeer of Delft* appeared in 1937, followed by the *Paintings of Jan Vermeer*, published by the Phaidon Press in 1940. This concentrated interest coincided with an unprecedented number of 'discoveries' of paintings attributed to the painter, and the canon was subject to considerable fluctuations. Thoré, in an article in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts* in 1866, described forty-seven works as by Vermeer; Hofstede de Groot, in 1911, in his *Catalogue raisonné of Dutch painters* cut down the list to thirty-three. Dr. A. B. de Vries (in 1939) placed the total at forty-three.

The present work by Dr. de Vries was first published in Holland in 1939, and a revised edition was issued in Switzerland in 1945. This date is significant, for in that year the "creative forgeries" of the Dutch painter, Hans van Meegeren, were discovered. This brilliant forger had painted a series of pictures after Dutch artists of the XVIIth century, and among them the "Supper at Emmaus" accepted as by Vermeer.

"The Supper at Emmaus" was regarded by Bredius as a "new Vermeer," and in the Phaidon Press *Vermeer* as "superb." Dr. de Vries cannot conceal his admiration for this work, in which van Meegeren has "produced a type of Vermeer that has never existed." In a different class is the "Music Lesson" (Plate 41) in which the figures, colour-scheme and accessories have all the external characteristics of the painter. This picture was welcomed in 1932 by Bredius as "a very beautiful authentic Vermeer" and "a masterpiece of the great man." Dr. de Vries' book is valuable as a record of the latest knowledge of Vermeer's work. With regard to the life of Vermeer no new material has been discovered, and it is not worth while recording the author's reaction (p. 20) to an imaginary Vermeer "silent and reserved, self-centred and with a tendency to melancholy." There is a full bibliography and index. M.J.

BOOKS RECEIVED

WILLIAM KENT, The Work of. Margaret Jourdain. (Country Life. £2 2s. net.)

WOODCRAFT IN DESIGN AND PRACTICE. By Rodney Hooper. (Batsford. 18s. net. 2nd Edition. Revised.)

OLD ENGLISH FURNITURE. A Simple Guide. Hampden Gordon. (Murray, 9s. 6d.)

SAMPLERS AND STITCHES. Mrs. Archibald Sinclair. (Batsford. 18s. 4th Edition.)

DRAWING, DESIGN AND CRAFTWORK. F. I. Glass. (Batsford. 16s. 4th Edition.)

XUM

HERALDRY. *Lee, of Hartwell, impaling Harcourt.*

R.W. (Burford). The arms on the sedan chair are impaled, and show the arms of Lee, of Hartwell, impaling Harcourt. On the dexter side of the shield is the Lee coat, which is : Azure, two bars or, a bend chequy or and gules. On the sinister side are seen the arms of Harcourt : Gules, two bars or. The crest is that of the family of Lee, and is "a bear passant sable, muzzled, collared and chained argent." These were the armorial bearings of Sir William Lee, fourth Baronet, of Hartwell, after his marriage in 1763 to Lady Elizabeth Harcourt. His bride, who was one of the trainbearers to Queen Charlotte at her marriage to George III, was the daughter of Simon, Earl Harcourt. (Both her parents died with tragic suddenness ; her mother, when at tea at a friend's house, and her father was accidentally drowned in a well at his seat, Nuneham Park, whilst trying to save the life of his favourite dog.)

Sir William Lee succeeded to the baronetcy when he was twenty-three. He became a man of taste, and devoted himself to the improvement of his seat at Hartwell, and made it one of the most admired houses in England. That his wife was a woman of grace and charm is shown in her portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds ; yet they did not escape Walpole's caustic wit, for in a letter written after a visit to Nuneham when the Lees were also there, Walpole complained that his "comfort had been a little damped by the constant presence of Sir William and Dame Elizabeth his wife, with a prim Miss, whose lips were stuffed into her nostrils. They sate bolt upright like macaws in a menagerie, and scarce said so much. I wanted to bid them call a coach. The morning and the evening was the first day, and the morning and the evening was the second day, and still they were just in their places." But Walpole was elderly and perhaps rather formidable, and the Lees were perhaps rather uncomfortable, and thinking they were no match for him, took refuge in silence. Sir William Lee died in 1799, and was succeeded by his elder son, who, dying unmarried, was in turn succeeded by his younger brother, Sir George Lee, rector of Hartwell and vicar of Stowe. He too died unmarried, and the title became extinct.

It is remembered that Hartwell became the home of Louis XVIII of France in his exile from his country. He came there with his entourage in 1808 and stayed until 1814. It is said that on his arrival at the house he was quick to notice the fleur de lys carved on the pilasters of the porch, and took the coincidence as a happy omen ; a coincidence it was, for the fleur de lys had not been freshly carved but had been there for two centuries, being a play upon the family name.

TANKERVILLE CREST with monogram T.B.M.

M.S. (Sintra, Portugal). The seal impressions of a lion's head issuing from a mural coronet show the family crest of the Earl of Tankerville, whose family name was, as it is now, Bennet. The date of the ring and the monogram identify the owner as the 6th Earl of Tankerville, for it was in 1859 when he succeeded to the earldom on the death of his father, the 5th Earl. He married, in 1850, Lady Olivia Montagu, the daughter of the 6th Duke of Manchester.

The monogram is devised to show T for Tankerville, B for Bennet, shown also in reverse, in the manner fashionable at that time, and M for Montagu. In the full achievement of the Earls of Tankerville's armorial bearings, two crests surmount the arms, the second crest being a double scaling ladder, for Grey, the first Earl of Tankerville having married Lady Mary Grey, daughter of Viscount Grey of Glendale.

WOLF PASSANT CRESTS

A wolf passant is the crest of the following families whose names begin with L : Lawley, Lawton, Leight, Lovell, Low and Lowe.

TREVOR OF BRYNKINALT

W.P. (Cheltenham). The arms and crest on the parchment are those of Trevor of Brynkinalt, and are blazoned : Per bend ermine and ermines, a lion rampant or. Crest : a wyvern sable. The original possessor of the parchment was probably Sir John Trevor of Brynkinalt (1637-1717), judge, and Speaker of the House of Commons. His two grandsons, his daughter's sons, were both created peers ; the elder became Viscount Hillsborough and father of the first Marquess of Downshire ; the younger was created Viscount Dungannon. After the death of the third Viscount Dungannon in 1862, the title became extinct, and the estates went to his kinsman, Lord Arthur Hill-Trevor, the second surviving son of the third Marquess of Downshire, who assumed by royal licence the additional surname and arms of Trevor and was created a peer as Baron Trevor of Brynkinalt.

SALE ROOM PRICES

CORRECTION : The price obtained for the Revirescit glasses at Sotheby's on June 2nd, in the August issue, should have been £580.

JULY 23 (cont. from Sept. issue). Pictures, CHRISTIE'S : Woody Landscape, Jan Brueghel, £231 ; A Man o' War, L. Backhuisen, £316 ; portrait of Lady, Allan Ramsay, £189.

July 23 to August 16. Works of Art, Knight, Frank & Rutley : Dresden cabinet tea set, Augustus Rex mark, twelve pieces, £20 ; Hepplewhite secretaire bookcase, £42 ; French rosewood bureau, £36 ; Carlton house writing table, £47 ; banded pedestal desk, £42 ; Georgian library table, £40 ; mahogany card table, £40 ; oak refectory table, 6 ft. 2 ins., £167 ; partners' mahogany desk, £100 ; Dutch marqueterie bureau display case, £55 ; Welsh dresser, £47 ; Wintry landscape, Ruysdael, £280 ; Summer landscape, Jan Van Goyen, £1,050 ; Copeland tea service, twenty-one pieces, £16 ; pair Dresden vases, 13 inches and another 7½, £25 ; mahogany bureau bookcase, £40 ; Old Staffordshire tea service, twenty pieces, £17 ; light oak refectory table, £50 ; old English bracket clock, Westminster and Cambridge chimes, £20 ; Crown Derby part tea service, £39 ; Dresden porcelain parrot, £15 ; two pairs Hochst male and female figures, £18 ; Georgian oak bureau bookcase, £30.

July 12 to 14. Contents Coton House, Rugby, and July 26 to 28, 3 Grafton Street, lately the residences of Mrs. Arthur James, deceased. ROGERS, CHAPMAN & THOMAS : set mahogany chairs, seven, £64 ; Chippendale writing chest, £58 ; Queen Anne wall mirror, £62 ; Louis XV commode chest of drawers, £52 ; Chippendale chest of drawers, £50 ; Louis XV kingwood and tulipwood china cabinet, £185 ; Sheraton bowfront chest, £64 ; large number of Louis XV cabinets, writing tables and chests, realising up to £460 each ; set Chippendale elbow chairs, £165 ; and ten dining chairs, £200 ; Crown Derby tea service, £110 ; Worcester apple green jug and pair vases, £173 ; set old English figures presumed Chelsea, £650 ; pair Longton Hall figures, £400 ; pair Bow china group of figures, Dove seller and tea vendor, £1,650 ; pair Longton Hall leopards, £220 ; pair famille rose Oriental vases, 4 ft. 6 ins., £420 ; French tall hall cased clock, £200 ; three French mantel clocks, £40, £54 and £195 ; Louis XVI kingwood and lac decorated cabinet, £1,400 ; and ormolu chandelier, £220 ; pair ormolu three-light candelabra in the Dresden style, £680 ; pair Kang-he pheasants, £1,000 ; pastille burner of the same period, £660 ; mantel clock in china case, £360 ; three blue ground and gilt Worcester vases, £520 ; pair seganola vases with covers, £660 ; large mask head jug, £190 ; two similar, £170 ; pair shaped dessert dishes and four plates, £160 ; four Flight Barr and Barr vases and centre piece, £200 ; pink bordered early Worcester dessert service, forty-seven pieces in all, £1,500 ; Swansea china desk inkstand, £360 ; eight old English pottery figures, Whieldon and Ralph Wood ware, £190 ; and three figures in the same style, £370 ; Old Worcester tea and coffee service, £380.

August 17 to 30. Works of Art, PUTTICK & SIMPSON. Continental porcelain : pair ballet dancers, £30 ; another figure, £36 ; two others, £42 ; and a group, £38 ; Vienna figure of man, £29 ; eleven baskets and jardinieres, £27 ; set five Dresden figures and a group by Schenreich, £342 ; pair French opaque glass vases, £58 ; pair Minton vases, £20 ; Discourse de la Methode pour bien conduire sa raison and chercher la verite, etc., 1637, £255.

July 26. Silver, CHRISTIE'S : Pair American plain mugs on circular moulded feet, the bowls spreading to the lip, with ribbed S-shaped handles engraved with the initials "M.D.," maker John Coddington, 1690-1743, Newport, Rhode Island, *circa* 1730, £360 ; three Queen Anne table candlesticks on moulded octagonal bases and octagonal baluster stems engraved with coat of arms in a baroque cartouche, 1705, £300 ; two-handled cup and cover on spreading circular foot, the lower part of the body chased with shallow fluting, by Thomas Boulton, Dublin, 1699, £170 ; pair William III candlesticks, £200 ; William and Mary plain cylindrical tankard and cover on reeded foot and reeded rim, 1694, maker's mark I.D. a dagger between, £250 ; and a Charles II one, Edward Swan, Dublin, engraved with coat of arms in scroll mantling, 1679 ; Christie's state that no Dublin tankard of an earlier date has previously been offered in their rooms, £500 ; Rhodian jug with Elizabethan silver gilt mounts, 1592, maker's mark I.H. ; the initials on the handle, E.T., are possibly those of Elizabeth Countess of Dysart, who married before 1651 Sir Lionel Tollemache ; there are only two other recorded jugs of this nature with fully marked Elizabethan mounts, £1,050 ; George II coffee pot, Richard Gurney and Thomas Cooke, 1732, £145.